

# ART AND LETTERS

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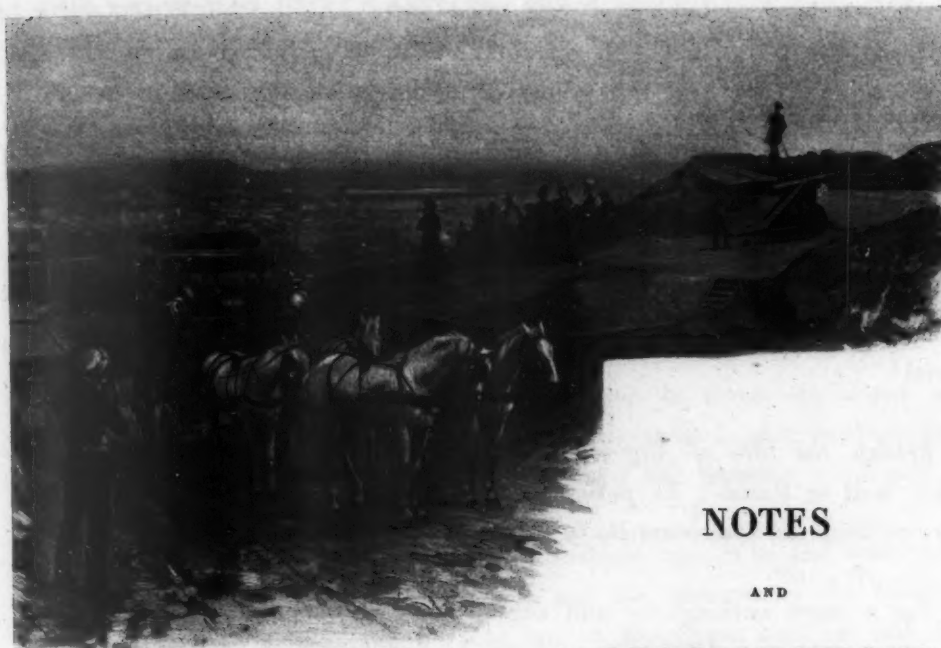
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# ART AND LETTERS



## NOTES

AND

## RECOLLECTIONS

*Friday, the 11th of August, 1871.* — Yesterday, in the park of Saint-Cloud, on the turf, in the midst of the big ambulance tents, a catafalque was pitched. Fifty or sixty crippled, maimed, or sick soldiers were drawn up round a coffin. Five or six, pale and worn out, had had themselves wheeled up near the coffin in invalid-chairs. In their beds, under the tents, the wounded raised themselves up and looked on from a distance. A military band played a funeral march; then a Protestant clergyman delivered an address. Many soldiers shed tears.

I asked the name of the man to whom such touching funeral honours were being paid. It was a young Danish surgeon, Doctor Arendrup. From the beginning of the war he had tended our wounded with the most admirable devotion; he has only just died.

Two soldiers were chatting behind me during the clergyman's address :

"Aren't they just laying the praise on thick about him!" said one of the soldiers, "aren't they just?"

"That's because he was a real good sort."

"Oh! I know that well enough, but if he had died six months ago they wouldn't have laid the praise on so thick, all the same. When we buried our lieutenant-colonel this winter, Saint-Calais way—he was a real good sort, too—they didn't say all that about him— A big hole, a few clods of earth, a wooden cross, and there was an end of it— An hour later up came the Prussians and we were fighting on the very spot where he had been laid— The banging of rifles and the cannon's roar, that's the only music and speechifying he had for his burial!"

*Friday, the 18th of August, 1871.* — This advertisement is displayed on every wall in Paris. *To politicians! To literary men! For sale, for a mere nothing, an important Daily Newspaper, Moderate Republican: apply to M. X., etc., etc.*

*For a mere nothing*— and suppose an agreement is come to about this mere nothing. Will the purchaser be condemned to remain a *moderate* Republican? Will he be allowed, if he should have a fancy that way, to declare himself an *immoderate* Republican?

As far as that goes, they are selling the strangest things just now. On the hoarding round the heap of ruins that was once the Ministry of Finance, I found, a moment ago, the following advertisements, side by side:

1° Sale by public auction, at Ivry fort, of twelve barrels of petroleum containing 1125 litres;

2° Sale by public auction, at the Louvre, of thirty-five thousand two hundred and fifty-eight pieces of body and table linen, belonging to the Imperial household;

3° Sale by public auction, at Tattersall's, of 100 horses of the German artillery;

4° Sale by public auction of two floating batteries, etc., etc.

What a selling off! And who on earth will buy the two floating

batteries? An old gentleman, of most pacific appearance, was standing before this advertisement, taking notes. Had he any idea of setting up a little second-hand navy? They will find a purchaser, depend upon it, will these two floating batteries, for my hairdresser said to me this morning :

"Things are going on all right, sir, going on all right. The false hair business has started again with extraordinary rapidity."

And it is not only the false hair business that has started again. Everything has taken a fresh start—— The new manager of the Opera wrote last week to the subscribers to ask them if they intended to retain their boxes. And the *Semaine religieuse*, in its number of the 22nd of July, publishes the following notice :

*Persons who belong to the Adoration pour le Cœur de Jésus are requested to be good enough to inform the Community if they wish to keep their days and hours of worship; in that case the requisite card will be forwarded to them.*

And, probably, some great leader of fashion has, with the same pen, written off to the manager of the Opera and the manager of the *Semaine religieuse* that she would take her old box at the Opera and her old day for worship.

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*Sunday, the 20th of August.* — At the time of the elections in February 1871, there was an extraordinary cropping-up of provincial notorieties and celebrities. They were, for the most part, barristers, worthy people with not too much business, all *bâtonniers* or *ex-bâtonniers*—it is no very difficult matter to become *bâtonnier* in the provinces—by no means young, but becoming grey and portly. Thus late, thanks to the course of events, a light broke upon their minds. They discovered their real vocation, politics. And all the geniuses of the provincial bar soared to Bordeaux, then from Bordeaux to Versailles.

After this, there was, with the Commune, a fresh and even more brilliant blossoming forth of great men, great statesmen and great military men. Never, in so short a time, had so many Frenchmen achieved glory, and such glory! Whence it comes about that the compilers of the big



Larousse's dictionary, for the past five or six years in course of publication, are at this moment in the most dreadful embarrassment. A thousand or twelve hundred great men of recent date are all falling into line at the door of the Pantheon and claiming their share of immortality. They will be the heroes of a supplementary volume.

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*Tuesday, the 22nd of August, 1871.* — The English caravans are beginning to run regularly. Our neighbours are coming to see the ruins of Paris and to visit the battle-fields round Paris : Buzenval, Champigny. The Place du Hayre, every morning, at about a quarter past ten, is an odd sight.

There, ranged alongside the curb-stone, are several big four-horse breaks — Each break-load is made up of forty or fifty Englishmen and Englishwomen. A hundred and fifty to two hundred tourists, guide-book in hand, with a field-glass slung over their shoulders, are on the pavement quietly waiting for the signal from their guides to take their seats.

French people would not show this calmness and patience. They would do their utmost each to get the best place, and there would be a fearful hustling.

Here there is the most perfect order. These English folk are wonderful — They recognize the fact that they are no longer their own property — They have arranged with a contractor, who has undertaken to board and lodge them, convey them from place to place, etc., etc. They keep quite quiet. They are no longer free beings; they are parcels handled by *employés*. They feel that it is the government's business to govern. And perhaps that is why they don't have revolutions every fifteen or twenty years in England.

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*Saturday, the 26th of August, 1871.* — The papers only publish very condensed reports of the sittings of the Courts-martial at Versailles; it is to be hoped that what is being said there will be preserved by the shorthand-writers and published *in extenso*. The history of the Commune, in all its strange simplicity, is contained in the evidence of the witnesses there.

Here, for instance, is the absolutely exact and full text of the words uttered yesterday by a witness of the name of Parod.

Colonel Merlin put this question to him.

"You were arrested under the Commune; for what were you arrested?"

"For nothing at all; because, as I was passing by, I irritated a colonel—I must tell you he was a little *screwed*, was this colonel—I was close by, on the pavement, with a friend; the colonel wanted to remount his horse—I notice that he puts the wrong foot into the stirrup. Says I to my friend: 'Let us stop and have a look at this, we shall get a laugh out of this chap!' However the colonel sees that he is using the wrong foot and tries the right one, but doesn't get it far enough into the stirrup, attempts to raise himself, misses his jump, slips, rolls over, gets caught in the stirrup, his cap goes one way, his sabre another. We split with laughing, my friend and I."

"It was a colonel?" slyly asked the President of the Court-martial.

"Yes, Mr. President, it was a colonel—anyhow, he had five silver stripes on his sleeve and on his cap. Says I to my friend: 'If it isn't too disgusting! And those are the sort of chaps that have people massacred!' I had spoken too loud. The colonel hears me, turns round and says: 'You aristocrat!—it's like you to make game of those who risk being killed on your account!'—'Anyhow you are not running the risk of being killed for me just now—and then I have never asked you to get killed on my account.'—'At your age,' answers the colonel, 'you ought to be in our ranks in front of the enemy.'—'In your ranks!—You yourself now, are you in your ranks? You're out on the spree!'—'Seize that man!' shouts the colonel.—'Seize me? The thing can't be done so easily as all that; where is your warrant? Besides I am a foreigner, a Swiss, born at Lausanne!'—'Ah! you are a foreigner, you have come to spend French money!'—'I don't spend French money, I spend my own money; it's you who spend French money!' At this hit there was a laugh among the crowd—they were friendly to me, and made room for me to pass. I prepared to slip away, but seeing the colonel and his orderlies trying to cut off my line of retreat, I said to myself: By and by I stand the chance of finding, in place of a



friendly crowd, an unsympathetic one; crowds in Paris are so fickle."

I stop here, but the whole deposition was in this tone, full of life and sharpness. You had the scene before your eyes; you looked on at the quarrel between this colonel, a little *screwed*, and this "aristocrat," who was an inoffensive vulgarian from Lausanne.

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*Monday, the 28th of August.* — A little conversation on the stage of the Variétés, between two very obscure, but very pretty little actresses. It was in the day-time during a rehearsal, in a quiet corner at the "wings." A mere framework of canvas separated me from the two young friends and, without being seen, I could hear perfectly.

"Well! so you spoke to him?"

"Yes, I called upon him, just now."

"And what did you say?"

"That you were quite disconsolate, but that, as he had ceased to do anything for you for three months past, you had no alternative but to say good-bye to him."

"And did he appear to understand?—"

"Not a bit— He began to pace up and down with passionate gestures. 'What! she has the audacity to say I have done nothing for her for the past three months! Stop a moment!— Look at this!—' And he took a little memorandum book out of a drawer. 'I suspected what would happen, so I took the precaution to write everything down; see for yourself—'"

"And you saw?"

"That he had spent fourteen thousand francs on you during the past three months—fourteen thousand francs! Why, as things go now, that is tantamount to quite twenty-eight thousand francs under the Empire."

"So it would be if it were true, but he has not spent fourteen thousand francs."

"Anyhow, he had got it written down."

"Ah! I see what it is! He has reckoned the jewelry in!"

At this moment the stage-manager intervenes.

"Now then it's your call, Mademoiselle X. It's your call."



And Mademoiselle X. advances to the footlights, repeating :

"Reckon the jewelry in! That's too bad—— Reckon the jewelry in!"

We remain alone together, the property-man and I. He is an old servant of the establishment, an excellent fellow, very popular with every one in the theatre. For many a long day have I been used to see him, enthroned in his property-room, in the midst of his gilt-wood clocks, his old flint-lock guns, his pinchbeck jewels, and his capons of paste-board. More than once it has chanced to me to have a chat with him behind the scenes, of an evening, and by no means without entertainment. His conversation is as good as that of many folk in society. He has heard the dialogue between the two actresses, looks at me, and says with an indulgent, commiserative smile :

"Poor little woman, she is a good deal upset, all the same!" And off he goes to the property-room to hunt up an old carbine and an old Calabrian brigand's hat which will be necessary for the performance by and by. What a lot of good-hearted people there are in this little world of the theatres : machinists, dressers, call-boys, etc., etc. And, with all their poverty, never a word is heard of jealousy, revolt, or anger against the luxury of the actresses. This worthy fellow who earns five or six francs a day sympathised with the misfortunes of the little woman who doesn't like the jewelry being reckoned in.

They are rehearsing one of Offenbach's big operettas, which is down for revival in a few days. I make for the front of the stage, but run against a little troop of choristers, half a score of basses who block up the way; with arms dangling and in a cavernous voice they are singing :

Grisons-nous tous  
Comme des fous,  
Et chacun ayant sa chacune,  
Amusons-nous au clair de la lune,  
Grisons-nous tous...

And, the chorus over, while Mademoiselle Aimée is delivering in a brilliant fashion the important bit of the *finale*; two of my basses strike up a conversation :

"It's queer to hear those tunes again, we didn't sing them last year. Where were you, during the war?"

"Here in Paris, in a marching regiment."

"I was in the army of the Loire, with General Chanzy. We had a rare bad time of it, before Le Mans."

And both, at a given signal, repeat with their comrades :

Grisons-nous tous  
Comme des fous...

I thread my way between the choristers and reach the stage. Offenbach is there, seated close by the footlights, in an arm-chair, very pale, and shivering in a winter overcoat.

"I am seedy," he says to me, "I haven't slept a wink all night, nor had any breakfast this morning; I can hardly speak or stand upright. The rehearsal is going wretchedly; all the numbers spoiled and dragged, and I haven't the heart to interfere——"

Before he has finished speaking he is on his legs, furious with rage, brandishing his stick. It is the chorus-women he addresses :

"What is this you ladies have been singing? Come, let us make a fresh start, and go through the *finale* again."

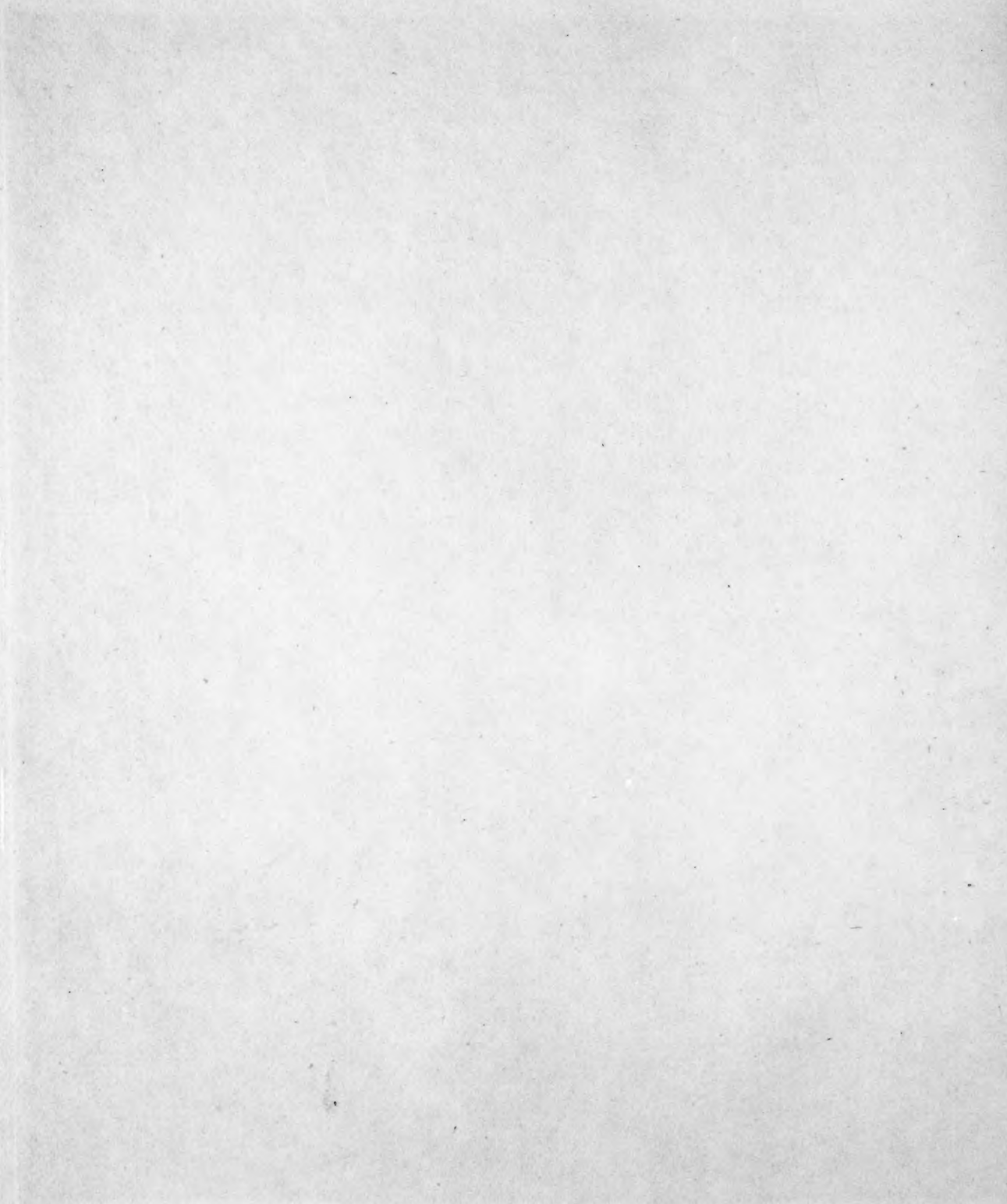
Offenbach posts himself by the piano, alongside the leader of the orchestra, and takes the direction of the rehearsal in hand. He has all of a sudden, miraculously as it were, recovered movement, strength and life. He becomes animated, excited, heated, gesticulates, talks, sings, shouts, is off to the far end of the stage to shake up sleepy choristers, returns to the footlights, then starts away to the left to push the "supers" into their places. A moment ago he was shivering; now he is bathed in perspiration. He takes off his overcoat and flings it in a heap on the chair, beats time with his arms, breaks his stick clean in two over the piano, lets slip an oath, throws down the half of his stick, roughly snatches the bow from the hands of the terrified conductor, and, without stopping, with extraordinary energy, continues to beat time, holding and drawing everybody at the tip of his bow. What cleverness in that original and expressive face! What energy in that little frail, delicate, puny body! It is no longer the same man, nor are the artists, the choristers







Punch Details





any longer the same. The *finale* is executed by sheer dash, all of a piece, without a single hitch, in a veritable whirlwind of gaiety and good humour. And every one, artists, choristers, "supers" and all, as the last note rings out, applauds Offenbach who falls worn out into his chair, saying :

"I have broken my stick, but I have restored my *finale*!"

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*Thursday, the 31st of August.* — The Court-martial, once more. People make out that there are three or four hundred different ways of saying "I love you;" there are just as many varieties of answering "no" to the following question put by Colonel Merlin to each witness :

"Are you a relation or connection of the prisoner?"

A big, fat woman enters the witness-box, flushed, uneasy, and excited. The President begins his little formula : "Are you a relation——"

"Me! Oh! did you ever!" cries the big, fat woman, indignant! And she seems positively shocked that such an idea could have entered the colonel's head.

The firemen, gendarmes, policemen, don't budge, and answer impassively : "No, Colonel."

A gentleman who comes up with an off-hand air and who, later on, in giving his evidence will try to shine, smiles on hearing the President's question and answers lightly, with a slight shake of the head :

"No, no, Mr. President."

Another advances slowly, majestically, solemnly; he strikes an attitude which he must have tried before the glass, in the morning. He cries : "Relation—— connection—— never! Mr. President." And he remains with his arms stretched out, in a theatrical attitude. He belongs to the class of witnesses proud of figuring in public.

Here, on the other hand, is the timid, uneasy, embarrassed witness. "Are you a relation or connection——?" He fancies he has misunderstood. He cannot account for such a question being put to him. At length he stammers : "I beg your pardon, Mr. President; but I don't quite understand." Then the colonel repeats the question, and the witness answers.

"Oh! no, neither a relation nor connection, and, besides, if I were, I wouldn't admit it."

A woman of about thirty, comely enough, tall, robust, fresh-coloured and of imperturbable coolness.

"Your name? Your age? Are you, or have you been, in the prisoner's service?"

Whereupon the woman answers in most distinct tones :

"In the prisoner's service! Lord bless you! I was his mistress for eighteen months; can you call that having been in any one's service?"

I have never seen a Court-martial more thoroughly dumb-founded. The colonel looked at the major, who looked at the captain; who looked at the Government commissary. All eyes were anxiously fixed on him. The President at length replies :

"No, no, you can't call that having been in any one's service."

"As you please, Mr. President."

And the interrogatory proceeds.

*Saturday, the 2nd of September.* — Another sale yesterday, the sale of the Emperor's carriages in the stable-yard at the Louvre. I was passing by along the quay. I see a hand-bill stuck up, above the balcony of Charles IX, a regular hand-bill of a judicial bankruptcy sale; nothing is lacking : names of expert and of auctioneer, ready-money payment, five per cent commission, etc., etc. I enter. Only the private carriages are being sold—

The auctioneer is at his post— An old gentleman, of very seedy appearance, comes up to him :

"And the state-carriages, when are they to be sold?"

"I can't say— This is a troublesome bit of liquidation— There would probably be a lack of buyers— There is no longer any market for second-hand Court equipages."

"No longer any market?"

The seedy old gentleman appears surprised, almost shocked.

"No, not now— After 1830, after 1848, the big royal carriages were disposed of on very good terms. There were many petty kings and



grand-dukes in Germany and Italy who were delighted to come across a *good bargain*; but the number of sovereigns has so diminished of late years that, I repeat, there is no longer any market——"

In this way, you see, Napoleon III, supporting the system of nationalities, of large agglomerations, helping the King of Italy and the King of Prussia to overturn the little Italian and German thrones, compromised not only the interests of France, but the liquidation of the Civil List as well—— they don't know what to do with his state carriages.

What a hecatomb, indeed, during the past ten years!—— In 1860, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the Dukes of Parma and Modena; in 1861 the King of Naples; in 1862, King Otho; in 1866 the King of Hanover, the Duke of Nassau and the Elector of Hesse; in 1867 the Emperor Maximilian; the Queen of Spain in 1869; the Emperor Napoleon in 1870, and, very soon, to all appearances, the Duke of Aosta, at this moment the very shaky King of Spain.

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*Monday, the 4th of September, 1871.* — I was riding back from Versailles; I had taken the longest road through Marnes and Ville-d'Avray. When passing through the pretty wood that bears the pretty name of "Fausses-Reposes," I suddenly perceive a man got-up like a countryman, blue calico blouse, corduroy trousers, broad-brimmed straw hat and all, seated before an easel, under a white parasol. I pull up, a little surprised. Who on earth was this old chap, painting away at his landscape? I recognize Papa Corot. There he was all alone, working in this deep silence, broken only by the birds singing overhead. Nature and he looked like two old friends, accustomed to live together as old cronies, understanding and loving one another thoroughly.

Suddenly Papa Corot rises, begins to hunt in his pockets, pulls out an old pipe and an old pouch crammed with tobacco. Slowly, carefully, lovingly, he fills his pipe. He was a mighty smoker before the Lord. After which a fresh hunt in his pockets, and now the old man is seized by a lively anxiety. He hunts and hunts, and finds not. 'Tis no longer anxiety, 'tis despair. He had forgotten his matches! To go back home



for a box, or spend the day without a pull at his *dear pipe*, as he used to say—— a poor choice!

I had some matches! A little box of wax matches with a portrait of M. Thiers, the whole for a penny. An ingenious negotiation at once came into my head. What a tempting speculation! Say to Papa Corot, "Give me this little landscape, and I, in return, will give you this little box of matches, with a pretty portrait of M. Thiers into the bargain! Picture for picture!" Perhaps Corot would have agreed—— But I dared not——

I approached. Hearing the dry leaves crackling under my horse's hoofs, Corot turned round, I saw his eyes gleam. Ah! *If only this gentleman should have a light*—— that's what Papa Corot was saying to himself. And I generously gave him my little box of matches—— I never remember receiving such heartfelt thanks. I went off through the wood at a walking pace. At about fifty metres' distance I turned my head. The old countryman had set to work again, but between the painter and his picture, arose the wreaths of a light column of smoke. Papa Corot had lit his pipe.

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*Friday, the 8th of September, 1871.* — Chance this morning threw into my hands a copy of the *Times* of the 21st of March last. The correspondents of the *Times* were then in ecstasies. On all hands, for ten months past, what a marvellous flow of *sensational* events! The *Times* had put into the field a regular army of reporters all full of "go," ardour, and, it must be admitted, talent, but inspired by a much warmer fancy for the victors than the vanquished. We have not been treated with impartiality and generosity by the great London newspaper. And yet those who desire later on to tell the story of the years 1870 and 1871, will find in the columns of the *Times* some very curious things of undoubted authenticity. This number of the 21st of March alone is the most striking, the most extraordinary of historical documents. It would well deserve translating from the first line to the last.

To begin with, two leading articles. The first is devoted to the marriage of the Princess Louise to the Marquis of Lorne. Observe what











an Englishman could write, while in France civil war was following the invasion, while we were amusing ourselves by cutting one another's throats, under the eyes of M. de Bismarck.

"To-day a ray of sunshine will brighten every household in England. "A daughter of the people, in the truest sense of the word, is to be married "to one of ourselves. The mother is one of us, and her daughter is one "of us. We honour the Queen and obey her; we crown her and we "pay her homage; we pray for her, and work for her, and fight for "her; we share her joys and her sorrows; we feel that in misfortune "as well as in prosperity, our destinies are linked to the destinies of the "dynasty to which we have entrusted ourselves for so many centuries "past. We have, to be sure, good reason to congratulate ourselves on "this, at a moment when the most necessary and the most ancient "principles of society are so strangely misunderstood. With us Royalty "exists in its mildest, wisest, most respected form. The Queen is an "Englishwoman and her family is an English family, etc., etc."

The second leading article is devoted to the Revolution of the 18th of March and begins thus :

"War is declared between Paris and Versailles, between the red flag and the tricolour. The Commune has risen against the Assembly. Between the two adversaries there is a question of might as well as a question of right, and it is the solution of the first that will decide the merits of the second."

I turn over the page and find a letter from the Paris Correspondent, under date March 19th, four o'clock in the afternoon.

"I have just been making," he says, "a little journey of exploration. "A line of sentinels bars access to the Place Vendôme, which was the "Head-Quarters of D'Aurelles de Paladines and is now occupied by the "soldiers of the Commune. The commander-in-chief, Henry, has left his "little Montrouge tavern for a new and quite princely residence. All is "tranquil in the neighbourhood of the Place Vendôme. I reach the Rue "de Rivoli, which is deserted. Not a man in the Tuileries sentry-boxes, "the gate-keeper at the Palace seemed profoundly puzzled. I wished to "enter; he remonstrated; he felt, although there was not a soul in the



"Tuileries, that he had still a sort of abstract duty to perform. He had  
"already seen many changes of proprietor, and was the only person who  
"could consider himself for the moment as the master of the house. I  
"had a curious talk with him and went on to the Hôtel de Ville."

All the streets are strongly barricaded on a particular system, and the *Times* Correspondent notes with evident satisfaction that this system is a very practical and ingenious one.

"A passage is left free in the middle for people on foot, the middle  
"section being in front and covering the two side sections. Children,  
"learning in good time the art of governing Paris, are actively at work on  
"the construction of the barricades, and, from time to time, passers-by are  
"requested to be good enough to bring up their paving-stone. The sound  
"of trumpets is heard and causes a certain excitement; national guards,  
"and soldiers of the line, the latter without arms, but more numerous than  
"the national guards, come up singing and waving their caps, and are  
"warmly welcomed by the barricaders. It is a moment when it is prudent  
"for the most anti-democratic persons to raise their hats and shew plenty  
"of enthusiasm."

I again turn over and see on the same page two despatches coming immediately after one another, dated, the first from Berlin, March the 18th, the other from Dover, March the 20th, and recording, the first, the return of the *Emperor-King to Germany*, and the second, the arrival of the *Emperor Napoleon in England*.

It was on Saturday, the 18th of March, that the Emperor William made his entry into Berlin at the same time that M. Assi and his friends made their entry into the Paris Hôtel de Ville. The *Times* Correspondent describes the great ovation accorded to the Emperor. The locomotives, railway carriages, and stations were decorated with flags and garlands of fir and oak, the two symbolic trees of Brandenburg and Germany. At several miles' distance from Berlin, the roads are lined by an immense crowd, workmen, school-children, corporations, everybody in holiday attire. This was the advance guard of the army of several hundred thousand persons who, in the capital itself, were awaiting the arrival of the sovereign. He appears, salutes, in the midst of enthusiastic hurrahs. He is received

by the Princes and Princesses of the Imperial family. At the same spot, in the same station, he had said good-bye to the Queen, eighteen months before—and leaving as King of Prussia, he returned Emperor of Germany. He embraces his wife, his daughters, his grandchildren, and, overcome by emotion, cannot restrain his tears. Bunches of roses, laurel crowns are thrown to him. Then he gets into his carriage and drives to the Palace at the very hour when the victors of Belleville and Montmartre were taking possession of the Hôtel de Ville and saying to one another: "Paris is ours, the thing now is to seize France!"

On the same day, the Emperor Napoleon, restored to liberty, was preparing to leave the palace of Wilhelmshöhe, and the *Times* of the 21st of March describes the journey of Napoleon III from Cassel to Dover.

On Sunday, the 19th of March, at six o'clock, while M. Thiers was evacuating Paris, taking with him all the Government, the Emperor was leaving Wilhelmshöhe, escorted by a German guard of honour, under the command of General de Monts, Governor of Cassel, who accompanied him as far as the frontier. There the Emperor is received by an aide-de-camp of the King of the Belgians, crosses the whole of Belgium in the Royal train and embarks on the *Comte de Flandres*, the King of the Belgians' steam yacht. At Dover the Emperor finds the Empress, the Prince Imperial, Prince Murat, Prince Lucien Bonaparte and the Ladies in Waiting, Mesdames de Saulcy and Carrette. An enormous crowd was waiting, and the English give the Emperor an enthusiastic reception. *Cheer upon cheer bursts forth from the assembled multitude; the Emperor smiles and bows, the Harbour-Master, Mr. William Henry Pain, approaches the Emperor and makes this extraordinary little speech:*

"On this same spot, fifteen years ago, at the time of your visit to England, I, received your Majesty, and once more I offer you welcome."

After having made a courteous answer, the Emperor sets off on foot for the South Eastern Railway station. The crowd is dense, the policemen have much difficulty in making a passage for the Emperor. He reaches the station, rejoins the Empress, who passionately embraces him again and again. The Prince Imperial throws himself into his father's arms, then the procession makes for the Lord Warden Hotel. The cheering is

redoubled. The people seem drunk with enthusiasm—there are enthusiastic cries of *Long live the Emperor!* *Long live the Empress!* The Empress appeared at once frightened and charmed; the Emperor kept smiling, and even when he was elbowed by the crowd, never stopped bowing and raising his hat. At the station another Royal train, and it is in a *saloon carriage upholstered in a delicious pale pink silk* that the Emperor makes the journey from Dover to Chislehurst. All this time Assi could drive about in Paris in the Emperor's carriages, for three or four of these carriages had been brought to the Hôtel de Ville during the first siege of Paris.

All this I find in my number of the *Times*. They are of yesterday, these things, and already far away, already forgotten. People force themselves to dismiss them from their thoughts. All they ask for is to enjoy life again, and they do enjoy it again, with all ease and rapidity, with too much rapidity, perhaps, too much ease—Have we not suffered enough? Have we not been sufficiently beaten and humiliated? Yet the lesson could not possibly be sharper. Behold us a prey to all the furies of *politiquaillerie*. The Chamber is beginning to crumble away in cliques and sub-cliques, in groups and sub-groups. There is nothing changed in France, there are only two provinces the less, and five or six parties the more. And the bulk of the country remains indifferent to all these wretched quarrels and party divisions. We are attacked by that *moral waste which results in the long run from the wear and tear of revolutions*. The phrase is M. de Tocqueville's.

In the years that preceded the partition of Poland, there sat in the Diet an old deputy, almost in his second childhood, but in whose spirit flashes of reason and patriotism would now and then recur. Suddenly, in the midst of a debate, in the thick of a party-fight, this old deputy would rise and shout: "*Finance! Soldiers! Finance! Soldiers!*" All our politics ought to be summed up in those two words. But the Versailles Assembly only takes pleasure in irritating debates. The return of the Chamber to Paris is one of the subjects that appear among the Orders of the Day, and, in regard to it, a very clever and witty deputy of the Left made this extraordinary speech:



"When a country is divided as France is, that country is very lucky to have a capital which undertakes to get revolutions over in three days."

So, you see, it is an understood thing, revolution is an *Article de Paris*. It is only at Paris that they know how to make artificial flowers, revolutions in three days, and eleven-sou purses—— The provinces would never bring a revolution to an end; the thing would drag, languish, never be done with—— while Paris arranges revolutions with perfect smoothness, despatch, thoroughness, and in three days. Paris doesn't bungle; it knows how to set about the thing, it is familiar with the *modus operandi*—invade the Chamber, proclaim a provisional government at the Hôtel de Ville, etc., etc., etc. And why talk of three days even? 'tis ancient history that. This is an age of progress. The thing was done in three hours, on the Fourth of September.

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*Tuesday, the 12th of September.* — Yesterday, at the Chamber, while somebody or other was saying something or other on some subject or other, I was taking stock of Gambetta. I had not seen him since the beginning of November, at Tours, during the war. He was sitting at the end of one of the benches, on the left. He had his *good fellow* look on him, his old look, his look of the time when he was nobody. It is to his credit that he preserves that look, for Gambetta is to-day a sort of little sovereign: he has kept his intimates, his courtiers, his Bordeaux and Tours staff, his administrative and political set. There you have the gravest danger of the present time! Two ravening packs, hungering for prefectures and sub-prefectures, Bonapartist ex-functionaries and Gambettist ex-functionaries, the "outs" of September 1870 and the "outs" of February 1871, are waiting with equal impatience and equal greed for the restoration of the man, Emperor or President, who shall give them back their posts. Politics are in the way of becoming a business, a trade, a speculation. These luckless "outs" remind me of the Captain Jachet whom Count d'Estourmel comes across in Italy:

"Captain Jachet enumerated to me one day the advantages that accrued to him from the command of the Castle of Orbitello. 'Independently of

the fixed salary,' said he to me, 'there are divers profits attaching to the place; wood, lights and importance.'

I spoke just now of the time when Gambetta was nobody. I was wrong, Gambetta was always somebody. It was in 1862 or 1863. Gambetta was not yet twenty-five, but "the Five" already treated him with extreme deference. These were, in the Corps Législatif, the regular representatives of five electoral divisions. Gambetta was, by a sort of popular acclamation, in every political debating-room in the Latin Quarter, the representative of the student-class. He was practically a member of the Chamber, though not so nominally; he was present at all the sittings and, when Picard or Jules Favre was in the tribune, each of them, from time to time, would cast shy side-glances up at Gambetta, who would signal to them his encouragement and approbation.

One day, yes, it was in 1863, sure enough, Picard was to speak. The house was full, crammed full, and Picard was in despair; he had no ticket for Gambetta, who was pacing backwards and forwards excitedly in the Salle des Pas Perdus. No seat for Gambetta! What would the students say? One of the deputies of the majority, M. de Montjoyeux, came to Picard's help; he went and saw M. de Morny, and asked him for a little corner for the young friend of "the Five."

"There is no room except in my tribune," answered M. de Morny. "I will have M. Gambetta placed there; I have heard a good deal about him, I shan't be sorry to have a look at him!"

So Gambetta was brought to the tribune of M. de Morny, who, opera glass in hand, examined the little *Quartier Latin* barrister. After which, he rang the presidential bell and opened the sitting.

This bell, which is always the same, Gambetta himself will perhaps one day set ringing. So the world wags!

Often and often, in those times, it happened to me to leave the Corps Législatif in Gambetta's company. We went in a little troop, five or six of us, at sunset, after the sitting, very slowly along the quays, and all along the quays, with much wit and eloquence, Gambetta would go through the sitting again for our benefit. Such and such a thing ought to have been said, and said in such and such a way. He was

not always satisfied with "the Five;" he complained of their being lukewarm and flabby. Ah! if he had only been there! He would get animated, heated, carried away, and would pour out echoing diatribes at the top of his voice. The second hand book-stall people watched us go by with astonishment.

One day, on the Quai Voltaire, in front of the office of the *Journal Officiel*, he delivered an admirable speech on the Liberty of the Press—And suddenly, in the midst of his speech, on the other side of the water, there issued from the Tuileries and defiled along the Quai du Louvre the big open carriages, with their equipage *à la Daumont*, four horses, postillions in gold lace, and the outriders and equerry on duty trotting by the side of the carriage door. It was the Emperor and Empress going to the Bois de Boulogne. Gambetta made the incident an excuse for a vehement apostrophe. There was only the width of the Seine between the Emperor and the young barrister who was destined to govern France as a Dictator, after the fall of the Empire.

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*Tuesday, the 19th of September, 1871.* — In the railway station at Saint-Cloud, another of those huge flocks of English people, with their field-glasses slung across their shoulders, and their *Guide de l'étranger à travers les ruines*, under their arms. In London, they have contracted for this trip with an agency. Here is the programme and tariff. I translate word for word :

*A week in Paris—Fare, first class hotel, ruins of Paris and battle-fields round Paris; evenings at the Opera and the Théâtre-Français; visits to the ramparts; excursions to Champigny, Saint-Cloud, Versailles, etc.; superior interpreter, all expenses paid and fees included : £ 10.*

Our English people are there, fifty or sixty of them. The superior interpreter, before setting his little troop in movement, delivers an address :

"Saint-Cloud," he says, "is quite *curious, interesting, sensational*, at the present moment, on account of the gay fair going on there, in the open air, with circuses and acrobats, the whole side by side with the destroyed town. We will begin with the ruins and finish up with the fair. *Off! Off! Ladies and gentlemen!*"



For there are about half a score *ladies* among these gentlemen. They set out, I follow. Saint-Cloud enchants and delights them. These are ruins if you like! How Saint-Cloud was destroyed and burnt slowly, *deliberately*, during the armistice, that they are quite aware of, these English people, for they read the *Times*, and Dr. Russell gave a faithful description of the burning of Saint-Cloud.

M. Jules Favre had come on the 24th of January to Versailles, to offer M. de Bismarck the capitulation of Paris; from that moment the armistice was to begin for the Prussians, Paris not firing another cannon-shot; and yet, on the 26th of January, Dr. Russell writes from Versailles:

*"Early this morning the town of Saint-Cloud was burnt by the Germans——"*

Thus begins Dr. Russell's letter to the *Times*, and is not that the most decisive answer to the German journalists who have the audacity to make out to-day that Saint-Cloud was burnt by French shells?

This was an act of *historic* retribution. The château of Saint-Cloud was fated to disappear, it has disappeared, and with it an entire charming town. The English people, all radiant, are to-day walking about in the midst of this vast mass of ruins—— Then they go off to see the fair, at full gallop, always at full gallop—— They have so many things to see and so little time to see them in—— The weather is splendid, there is a great crowd at this Saint-Cloud fair. And lots of fun—— loud roars of laughter at the fooleries of the mountebanks outside their booths. The English brigade elbow their way to a place with cool eagerness and fierce curiosity—— You hear exclamations: "Oh! very picturesque, very original indeed, both the ruins and the fair!" Just now they were buying splinters of shell, now they are buying penny-whistles—— But time presses—— the guide drives his flock station-wards. They had only one hour for the ruins and fair, the hour is up—— Now for Versailles! Versailles is the next item.

And I bethink me, in the midst of all the din of the fair, of my last visit to Saint-Cloud, during the Commune. It was on the 9th of April, Easter Sunday. We had come on foot from Versailles. At ten in the morning we enter the church of Saint-Cloud—— They were chanting

high mass. The voices of the choir-boys rose shrill and clear, accompanied at once by the organ of the church and by the cannon of Mont-Valérien. A priest ascended the pulpit and began to preach on our duty towards our neighbour. The end of the sermon was very touching.

"In the midst of all our sorrows," said the priest, "in the midst of all our anguish, God does not abandon us. Jesus Christ is still with us. His Church is standing, spared intact, among the ruins—— Pray my brethren and communicate in the Lord."

All the women wept. What a pulpit on such a day, in such a place, what a pulpit for a Lacordaire or a Ravignan!——

We leave the church. The bridge of Saint-Cloud is guarded by a company of the line. The Federates occupied the Bois de Boulogne. From the right to the left bank of the river, between Suresnes and Saint-Cloud, rifle-shots were being exchanged. The way across the bridge was closed. An angry woman was disputing with a sergeant.

"It is in your own interest," the sergeant was saying to her, "that you are prevented from going through. You will be a deal better off, won't you, when you have got a bullet in your head?"

"A bullet! a bullet!" rejoined the woman, "I don't care very much if I do get a bullet in me, for all the fun there is in life at present—— Besides I'm not going to get shot. I am used to going about in the midst of rifle-shots ever since the firing began. Let me pass."

"You can't."

"Ah! the Prussians, I declare, were less of a nuisance than you are, they let us pass when they held the bridge—— One could go about one's business then—— I have some washing to take back to Boulogne. You will make me lose my customers——"

At this moment the fire became hotter. The sentries, all along the quay of Saint-Cloud, were watching the opposite bank and stood motionless, ready to fire.

"Will you be off now, and leave us alone?" said the sergeant to the woman.

And the latter took herself off with a shrug of the shoulders: "What



a fuss they are making, to be sure, about a few trumpery rifle-shots!" she said. "Well, I must try and get across by the bridge of Sèvres."

We return past the ruins of Saint-Cloud. We re-enter the church. Mass was coming to an end. The old Curé of Saint-Cloud, in a slow and grave voice, was pronouncing the *Ite missa est*. The cannon of Mont-Valérien boomed louder than ever.

How near us all that is! Six months! Scarcely six months! And it is the big drum beaten by the mountebanks in the Saint-Cloud fair that I am hearing, instead of the cannon of Mont-Valérien.

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*Thursday, the 21st of September.* — The English papers much admire M. Grévy's address at the end of the last sitting of the Chamber :

"Gentlemen," he said, "the session is closed." He put on his hat and went away— I know another speech that, for vigour and conciseness, will bear comparison with the allocution of the President of the National Assembly.

It was before the Court-martial. Colonel Boisdénemetz calls on a quarter-master of the Republican guard, whose official duty it was to defend a *pétroleuse*, the woman Papavoine, I think. He was an old grey-moustachio'd soldier, his breast laden with medals, and his sleeve gorgeous with stripes. It is his turn to speak. He rises, in a mighty nervous state—it was his first brief—salutes, saying, "Colonel, Colonel—" consults his papers, coughs, blows his nose, turns over the leaves spread out before him, repeats "Colonel— Colonel—" twirls his moustache, hitches up his belt, and at last, with an effort, saluting once more, blurts out all in a breath :

"I leave the matter to the justice of the Court." He sits down again— It was all over. He mops his forehead. He was bathed in perspiration.

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*Saturday, the 23rd of September.* — Decidedly it is only a very small number of epigrams that periodically go the round of history. Here is one that has been told a hundred times : the Emperor Napoleon III was holding a review in the court-yard of the Tuileries ; Mademoiselle



de Montijo was looking on, from a ground-floor window; after the march past the Emperor rode up to the window and said to Mademoiselle de Montijo :

"How am I to reach you?"

And the future Empress answered :

"Through the chapel, Sire."

Well, in a little volume of *Memoirs of Henry IV*, printed in 1782, I find these three lines :

"Henry IV having asked Mademoiselle d'Entraygues, whom he loved, by what way he could get to her room—'Through the church, Sire,' was her reply."

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*Friday, the 29th of September.* — I thought the formula : *To be continued in our next*, was of quite recent invention. Not a bit of it. This morning, in Prudhomme's *Révolutions de Paris*, I was enjoying a long article entitled "Origin, definition, manners, customs, and virtues of the *sans-culottes*," and there I found this astounding sentence :

"—Many people nowadays try and hide themselves under this mantle of *sans-culottisme*."

After getting through the article, I begin turning over the leaves of the volume at hap-hazard and, at the end of the number for the 8th of Brumaire, Year II, I find this line :

*The examination of Marie-Antoinette in our next.*

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*Thursday, the 12th of October.* — Are we going to be in for a strike of electors? Sixty-two thousand abstentions out of a register of a hundred thousand; the proportion is everywhere the same. In face of this result all the political journals display an astonishment which, in its turn, astonishes me. They seek the cause of this want of tone in the electoral body and find it not. All the same, it is a very natural one. I was talking yesterday with a farmer from the Seine-et-Marne.

"Well," said I to him, "I suppose you voted last Sunday?"

"I? Oh, no, indeed, I didn't vote."

"Why not?"

"Why not? Catch me going and bothering myself about voting, now we are free——"

"What do you mean by now we are free?"

"I mean free. Under the Empire, you had to look alive, there was the mayor, and the schoolmaster, and the rural guard, all worrying you and making it unpleasant for you if you didn't vote the right colour; but now we are free—— Why, on Sunday, I sold a cow; I would much rather do that than vote any day."

I could not get him away from that; he was free and had sold his cow!

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*Wednesday, the 18th of October.* — Dined yesterday with one of our present ministry. This is what he told us. He is looking out for a coachman; a candidate presents himself, with a very decent appearance: good height, portliness, an air of importance and dignity. Thereupon the following little dialogue is started:

"What place are you leaving?"

"I am still in a situation, Monsieur le Ministre."

"With whom?"

"With M. de X." (here the well-known name of one of the statesmen of the Second Empire).

"And why do you want to leave him?"

"Well, Monsieur le Ministre, it's in this way—— When Monsieur de X. was a minister under the Empire, I made my two thousand francs and more, because I got five hundred francs out of the official cash; but now Master is no longer a minister, I am reduced to my bare eighteen hundred francs. I know well enough that Master is always telling me, 'Have patience, have patience—— the Empire will come back—— I shall be a minister again. You will recover your five hundred francs.' But you see, Monsieur le Ministre, I don't believe in the re-establishment of the Empire."

At this same dinner-party was a very charming Englishwoman, Lady D. who, though only twenty, has just made a wedding-journey round the world. She told us all about her journey in the most original fashion,

in queer and daring French. "*Ça ne lui a pas paru très important, le monde, oh! pas du tout. Cela a été si vite fait, ce tour du monde—*" One thing alone seemed to her really interesting— she succeeded, in New Zealand, in having a chat with a cannibal— "*authentique—*" she had hesitated over the word— "Is that quite the right word to use?" she asked us, a little uneasily. "Yes it is quite the right word." Then reassured she went on :

"They had had so much trouble to get him for me— He was an old, a very old Maori— There remain so few, so precious few people who have eaten human flesh— And this fellow had eaten it, they were sure of that. But what trouble I had to get a word out of him— He knew enough English to understand and answer me— only he was unwilling to say anything. He had a most respectable appearance, a look of gentleness and kindness, and such wild eyes! I kept hovering round and round the question— but they know, these old cannibals, that the thing is no longer practised and they don't care to make admission— At length, one day, as he was in a good-humour—I had given him a little musical-box which played dance tunes—I summoned up all my courage. 'Come, tell me the truth, you have eaten human flesh— Is it nice?' Then his eyes lit up and began to gleam— I had my right hand raised, close to his face, and he looked at my thumb and said : 'Oh! Lady, when a man has eaten the thumb of a young English lady he has no stomach for any other meat!'"

This same young lady subsequently drew for us a very sombre picture of the actual situation in England.

"Oh! things are not going well with us, not going well at all— There are bad symptoms— If you only knew how difficult it is for us to find suitable people for powder and plush livery— Grooms are no longer respectful; they used to be so well-behaved, and quite naturally, as though born so; when they ride behind, they don't know how to keep their distance now, and they cut jokes, among themselves, behind you— You never used to see that sort of thing. And, on the last opening of Parliament, when the big state carriages went by, there was quite shocking laughter in the crowd— In short, it is respectfulness



that is disappearing, and the other evening Lord R. said that nothing seemed to him more full of menace for the future of our country."

And these things were uttered by this pretty woman with imperturbable gravity.

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*Friday, the 20th of October, 1871.* — There is one man who, this week, has conceived a great and profoundly philosophical idea. He is a stationer on one of the boulevards—— He sells photographs and has arranged a little exhibition in his shop-window of an absolutely original sort. He has placed the fashionable dames of the Second Empire alternately with the feminine celebrities of the Commune; and this is the hotch-potch he has made of it : Princess Metternich, Eulalie Papavoine, Duchess de Sesto, the woman Angelina, Princess de Sagan, Clara Fournier, Marchioness de Gallifet, Widow Leroy, Countess de Pourtales, the she-colonel Vinot, etc...

The effect is bizarre, strange, unexpected—— and the delicate and finely modelled head of the Duchess de Sesto has the queerest little air in the world between the massive, brutal, and violent countenances of Eulalie Papavoine and the woman Angelina, whose vast and exuberant charms are—— very imperfectly confined by a hideous white bodice—— Angelina has carelessly tied up her hair in a check bandanna, and her feet, enormous feet, glaringly improbable feet, solid pedestals for so heavy a monument, are stretched out under a short and clinging petticoat—— Angelina has her head slightly turned to the left and seems to be gazing at the Princess de Sagan's long train.

Stendhal, in Louis-Philippe's reign, wrote :

"After this noble character (Madame Roland), came the ladies of the Empire who wept as they drove back in their barouches from Saint-Cloud, when the Emperor had thought their dresses in bad taste ; then the Restoration dames who went to hear mass at the Sacré-Cœur that they might make their husbands prefects ; lastly the ladies of the 'happy mean,' models of naturalness and amiability."

There Stendhal stops—— He thinks that this thing is done with, that women of an *original and a marked character* shall no more be seen in the world. What a mistake! Since that epoch there have been women

of the *most original and the most marked character*. I want no other proof of this than the photographs exhibited in this stationer's shop-front.

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*Wednesday, the 25th of October.* — A great to-do at the Opera this evening. One of the singers of the place, Mademoiselle Hisson, in the course of the day, with her own prettiest of hands boxed the ears of a critic of no small consequence, who had not been sufficiently loud in her praises. Nothing was being talked of behind the scenes but that, and Madame Cardinal said to me :

"No, sir, I cannot approve of such a thing—— A genteel woman, a woman who respects herself doesn't do those things herself—— She sends her lover!"

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*Saturday, the 28th of October.* — Winterhalter the painter has thrown us over. He has turned German once again. For twenty years he has signed all the official portraits of the Orléans family, then, for twenty years more, all the portraits of the Imperial family. But to-day, good-bye to sovereigns of France, good-bye to the Château of Saint-Cloud, good-bye to the Palace of the Tuileries, good-bye to both Imperial and Royal families; in short, good-bye to official commissions for Winterhalter, and he is off to Berlin to paint the portraits of the Hohenzollerns. The Decameron of the Empress Augusta after the Decameron of the Empress Eugénie.

At the Salon of 1855, what a crowd there was, all curiosity and animation, round Winterhalter's picture, *l'Impératrice entourée de ses dames d'honneur!* Then in the full splendour of her ideal beauty, the Empress Eugénie could bear, without risk or misgiving, the company of the admirable creatures chosen by the Emperor for her retinue. There they were all in low, very low, dresses, the Sovereign and the Palace dames, amid lawns and flowers, under the leafy shade of an enchanted garden. The Empress, seated, with roses in her right hand, and fearlessly turning full to the spectator, under its wealth of fair hair, the most delicious face in her whole kingdom. On her knees, in the foreground, Madame de Montebello, thrusting her beautiful hands into a mass of flowers.



Madame de Latour-Maubourg, in profile, with her lovely dark tresses, resting her hand on the bare shoulder—and what a shoulder!--of the Marchioness de Las Marismas. And in the left-hand corner, at the feet of the Empress, by the side of Madame de Lezay-Marnezia, the Baroness de Pierres, all dainty and charming : a veritable court of youth, grace and love, against a background like some footlight scene of fairy-land !

The revolution of the 4th of September was merciful towards Winterhalter's works; the revolution of the 24th of February had shown more brutality. All Winterhalter's pictures were literally cut to pieces, and it was pointed out the next day, in one of the papers, that the fury of the populace had been directed with peculiar violence against every canvas signed Winterhalter.

Now, the fact is that one man had presided over this work of destruction. The man in question was Nazon the painter, who figured in the foremost rank among the invaders of the Tuileries. But Nazon had not come there as a rioter; he had come as a sight-seer, an amateur, an artist. Still, to give himself a certain revolutionary touch, he had armed himself with a huge Arab pistol *of which the flint was of wood*—A witty fellow, this Nazon the painter. And then too, he is a Montauban man, that is to say he possesses the sonorous flow of words and the southern accent that are so quick to stir the masses.

He had not gone fifty steps before he found himself the chief of a little band of thirty or forty devoted followers. No one knows exactly to what an extent the populace is consumed by the need of obeying somebody. Nazon the painter looked around him, and perceived in the saloons of the Tuileries, many mighty fine things threatened with pillage and destruction. Then, what did he very adroitly do? He began to post sentinels.

"Stand there," said he to his men, "and let no one touch those vases— You understand clearly— these vases are no longer the property of the tyrant, they are the property of the people, your property, mine and yours."

And the sentries docilely set to mounting guard, and became, in the twinkling of an eye, excellent policemen.













Still Nazon the painter, who knew the human heart, saw that it was necessary from time to time to throw a sop to the popular fury. So, as soon as he caught sight of a Winterhalter : "Citizens," he cried, "there is a thing which must perish under the vengeance of the people—— It is a Winterhalter ! Do you understand me ? A Winterhalter !" And he dwelt with terrible emphasis on the word : "It is a Win-ter-hal-ter !"

The crowd rushed on the canvas, tore it to pieces, and that is how Nazon the painter, on the 24th of February, 1848, abandoned seven Winterhalters to the just wrath of the sovereign people.

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*Wednesday, the 8th of November.* — Yesterday evening, after dinner, five or six politicians were divided on this delicate question :

Was the 4th of September a revolution ? Or was it an insurrection ? Those who had a fancy for the 4th of September were for *revolution* ; the others for *insurrection*. I took no side in the dispute ; I was conscious of my incompetence ; but, on my return home, I took down the Dictionary of the Academy. Under the word *Insurrection* I read this : "A rising against the Government ; those who use this expression attach to it an idea of right and justice." So the word has a good sense, and they deceive themselves who think to brand the 4th of September by treating it as an *insurrection*.

But what charmed me, was the first definition of the word *Revolution* in the Dictionary of the Academy : "The return of a planet to the place whence it started." And I at once called to mind a few lines of that wonderful volume : *Les Derniers Souvenirs du Comte d'Estourmel*. A short time after the revolution of 1830, the Comte d'Estourmel had a paralytic stroke which distorted his mouth. "It took," he says, "a new position between eye and ear. Gradually, however, my mouth returned to its natural position, and thus terminated its own revolution of 1830, for a revolution is not really ended until every one has resumed his proper place."

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*Friday, the 10th of November.* — Here are the book and autograph sales beginning again. Yesterday I was turning over the leaves of a catalogue of autographs entirely devoted to historical and political cele-

britics. It contains a hundred and fifty-three letters, thirty-two of which are from French people who subsequently had their heads cut off : Louis XVI, Camille Desmoulins, Marie-Antoinette, Hérault de Séchelles, Robespierre, Lavoisier, Saint-Just, the Dubarry, Collot d'Herbois, Chaumette, etc., etc., etc.

What other country in Europe could furnish so many decapitated politicians ?

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*Saturday, the 18th of November.* — After all these revolutions, invasions, and insurrections, many people have fallen into poverty and, in a hap-hazard way, adopt the first trade to hand. Victor Massé had a piano very much out of tune. He is recommended *a respectable man deserving patronage*. He sends for him, and leaves him alone with the piano. After an hour's horrible din the tuner asks for his hundred sous. Massé strikes a chord or two, and at once exclaims :

"But the piano is out of tune, horribly out of tune!"

"Sir," replies the tuner : "Chopin liked them so!"

This answer was quite worth a hundred sous. Massé paid them, and sent for another tuner.

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*Monday, the 20th of November.* — In a famous drawing-room yesterday evening, two groups; the first round General Changarnier, the second round M. Duvergier de Hauranne, who, when a member of the Legislative Assembly, had the honour of being sent to Mazas in December, 1851.

And the subject of conversation in the two groups chanced to be the same : the Coup d'État.

"Why," some one says to General Changarnier, "why did you not take the initiative in 1851? Why did you not arrest the President?"

"Oh!" answered the General : "the Chamber did not back me up. They dared not!"

And so saying, the General pointed to M. Duvergier de Hauranne, to whom, at the same moment, the same question was being put, and the ex-deputy waved his hand in the direction of General Changarnier : "What would you have? He dared not!"



By gestures and looks each put the blame on the other's back.

*Tuesday, the 28th of November.* — Voltaire, on the 18th of February, 1760, wrote to Madame du Deffant.

"I would much rather hold French than Prussian stock. Our destiny is to be always committing follies and recovering ourselves. We shall hardly ever miss an opportunity of ruining ourselves and getting beaten, but, at the end of a few years, we shew no trace of it. The industry of the nation repairs the blundering of the ministries."

May the *industry of the nation* justify Voltaire's confidence once again! In the same letter, I find this other sentence about Frederick the Great :

"Since you possess, Madame, the poems of this king, who has pillaged so many verses and so many towns, etc., etc."

And the same day, Voltaire wrote to Thiériot :

"The philosopher of Sans-Souci occasionally pillages verses, they say; I should be glad if he would give up pillaging towns, etc., etc."

And, three days earlier, Voltaire wrote to the Count d'Argental :

"Tell me about the poems of this man, who has pillaged so many verses and so many towns, etc., etc."

Number three! Voltaire had no scruples about *pillaging* himself. When he had hit upon a neat phrase, he was not unwilling for it to go out and about, and he struck off several copies of it with slightly different readings.

One might write a piquant study under the title : *Voltaire and Mérimée as courtiers*. In his correspondence, Voltaire is always groaning over the hard necessities of the courtier's trade. "My destiny," says he, "was to hurry from king to king, while I loved liberty to idolatry."

And, in November, 1732, he writes from Fontainebleau, to M. de Formont :

"I ought to have been spending part of my time in writing to you, and the rest in correcting *Zaïre*, but I have wasted the whole of it at Fontainebleau in setting actresses quarrelling about leading parts, and the Queen and the princesses about private theatricals; in forming keen factions about trifles, and in setting the whole Court by the ears about mere nothings."

I recollect hearing Mérimée, about 1858, talking in exactly the same way. He had just come from this same Palace of Fontainebleau. He had had to play charades, write verses for the Empress, go a-picnicking, had been caught in a heavy shower, and taken a severe cold. "Ah! I was not intended," he said to us, "for the courtier's trade!"

Well, Voltaire used absolutely the same phrase in a letter to Maupertuis: "Being at Court, without being a courtier." Only Voltaire did not speak the truth, while Mérimée was perfectly sincere. Voltaire was a courtier; he had the taste and the vocation, the weakness and greediness of the trade. Mérimée, on the other hand, never asked for anything. He had a very sincere attachment for the Empress Eugénie, and it was that alone which brought him to Court, and kept him there. He kicked now and then against the servitude of etiquette, but, at all costs, he had to put up with it. He cared for neither the Pope, nor the Jesuits, nor the priests, and yet, at Compiègne and at Fontainebleau, mass was a strict rule on Sundays. Mérimée at mass! I really believe that the chief reason for Mérimée's anger against the Pope was the vexation of a scholar. There is an admirable library at the Vatican, and this library is remorselessly closed to curiosity hunters and students. Mérimée used to reflect: "If the Pope left Rome, and gave up the Vatican, all these books and manuscripts would be ours." Condemned to be a spectator of Court life, Mérimée tried to get some amusement out of it. He listened, watched, observed, took notes. All Mérimée's papers were burned, in the Rue de Lille, in the Commune fires, and many curious things have been lost to the history of his time. At Compiègne, Mérimée improvised charades, and becoming a drawing-room actor, used to take part in his charades, in scenes with M. de Morny; he was not ill-pleased, as far as that goes, to live in the midst of the great ladies and of the lovely creatures he so much admired.

Voltaire at Court was always a-begging: he exerted himself to place his little *divertissements*; he was in a perpetual fuss about getting his tragedies played; he loaded the princesses with flattering verses, for, said he, "*there is no goddess whose nose is not tickled with the odour of incense*;" he asked for favours, money, pensions, played the mendicant.



From Fontainebleau, on the 8th of October, 1735, he writes to the lady of President de Bessières :

"I have found myself nearly always on the move, inwardly cursing at the courtier's life, uselessly pursuing a little piece of fortune, that seemed to dangle before me, and vanished forthwith as soon as I thought I grasped it."

Similar lamentations on the 17th of October, 1725. He has been very well received by the Queen, she has cried over *Marianne*; laughed over the *Indiscret*. She often talks to him. She calls him her poor Voltaire. "A fool," he says, "would be content with that." But he feels that praises are of no great account, that the part of a poet at Court is not without a touch of the ridiculous, and he adds : "It is not permissible to be a native of this country, without some sort of establishment. They feed me every day with hopes, out of which I get precious little nourishment."

On the 13th of November, 1725, after a stay of more than two months at Fontainebleau, Voltaire again writes : "The Queen is being constantly bored to death with Pindaric odes, sonnets, epistles, and epithalamia. I fancy she takes poets for *Court Fools*, and in this she is right enough, for it is a great piece of folly for a man of letters to be here."

It is impossible to read this letter about Court Fools without thinking of the *Chambre Bleue*, that somewhat lively tale, written for the Empress and signed "*Mérimée, Her Majesty's Jester*." Mérimée reads this tale to the Empress, and next day, is called on by an ambassador sent by a Russian Grand Duchess, who wanted to have the *Chambre Bleue* read to her too. Mérimée refuses. He answers that he is Her Majesty's Jester, and does not exercise his functions in public. He, however, asks permission, it is granted him, and the Grand Duchess gets her reading.

O eternal repetition of the human comedy! And don't let us think of saying that those are things of the past, that there is no longer any Court in France, or any courtiers—— No longer any Court, if you like, but as to courtiers, M. Thiers has his set of them, and M. Gambetta his, only they are no longer Voltaires and Mérimées, the more's the pity.

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*Saturday, the 23rd of December.* — In the Champs-Élysées, children



are playing, singing, dancing round and round. I stop and look on. Two little girls from seven to eight years old, tired with skipping, break away from the others to rest and breathe a little. They come and sit down in front of me, and begin to chatter :

"It will soon be Christmas."

"Yes, next Monday."

"Are you going to put your shoes in the grate?"

"No, papa doesn't like us to any more—— Mamma would, but papa got angry last year; he said it was all nonsense——"

"What was all nonsense?"

"To believe that Old Father Christmas comes down through the chimney like that, to bring good children toys. It seems that is no longer true, that he does not come any more."

"Oh, yes, he comes still, mamma told me only yesterday : 'Be good until Monday, and Old Father Christmas will come.'"

"But papa says it's all nonsense."

"But mamma says it's not nonsense!"

There the conversation broke off. The little ones had recovered their breath, and with many gambols and shouts of glee, "returned to the dance" as the song says. They represented between them, old France and the France of to-day, and I bethought me, as I walked away, of a delightful passage in George Sand's *Histoire de ma vie*. She tells how, as a child, she had a profound belief in the coming down the chimney of Father Christmas, the good old white-beard, and she adds :

"We ought to serve children with dishes suited to their age, and anticipate nothing. So long as they have need of the marvellous, we ought to give it them; to cut the marvellous out of a child's life, is to act in defiance of the very laws of nature."

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*Thursday, the 4th of January, 1872.* — Our expenditure for 1872 will very probably exceed two milliards and a half. And it was, I think, in 1825, that General Foy, confronted with a budget of one milliard, said to the Chamber : "Are you aware, gentlemen, that it is not a milliard of minutes since the birth of Jesus Christ?"

*Saturday, the 13th of January.* — I tried to read to-day three recently published novels. They were nothing but a fearful heap of brutality and coarseness. What pictures of our manners! Not one honest woman, not one! All vicious, all shameless, all adulteresses!

And that is the reason why our poor Frenchwomen have, all the world through, such a bad character!

On the 18th of October, 1870, the *Cologne Gazette* published the following telegraphic despatch :

"At Wilhelmsöhe the Emperor Napoleon was much pleased yesterday with the arrival of the Princess Murat. People here expected to see a great lady of the *cocodette* sort, and great was the surprise when they beheld a lady dressed in the simplest taste, hanging affectionately on her husband's arm, an impossible attitude, it was thought, for a French couple."

I have been at the pains of translating literally. Such was the unanimous opinion of the Germans about Frenchwomen. The blame rests with us writers, and also with the public who read us. People in France cannot put up with the kindly, gentle, peace-breathing literature, the literature of the household and family life, which delights English and German readers. The most virtuous women in France like to read the story of women who resemble them the least. Thence comes the peculiar turn and style of our novels and plays. We are obliged to choose *exceptions*, and these exceptions are assumed, abroad, to be the *rule*.

And yet there is in the mass of the French nation as much probity, honour, and virtue as in any people in Europe. The Germans themselves, during the war, were obliged to do us justice. Three or four balloons, sent up from Paris, fell within the Prussian lines. The letters captured were at once sent off to Versailles, and officers of the Head-Quarters Staff were appointed to go through the Parisian correspondence. Well, a German journalist—it was, I think, M. Wachenhusen—has told, in the most curious fashion, what were the impressions of the Prussian officers on reading these letters from Paris.

"They are positively amazed," he wrote. "The majority of the letters are respectable, full of elevation, noble, and touching. Husbands write

"to their wives, and seem really to love them; mothers write to their children—— Their hearts are torn, and yet bear up firmly against their present trial. There are letters written by sons to their fathers, and these letters are affectionate and respectful. Honour and virtue in French people, in Parisians! It is incredible, and yet it is a fact—— Why on earth are French novels and newspapers so fiercely bent on trying to prove the contrary?"

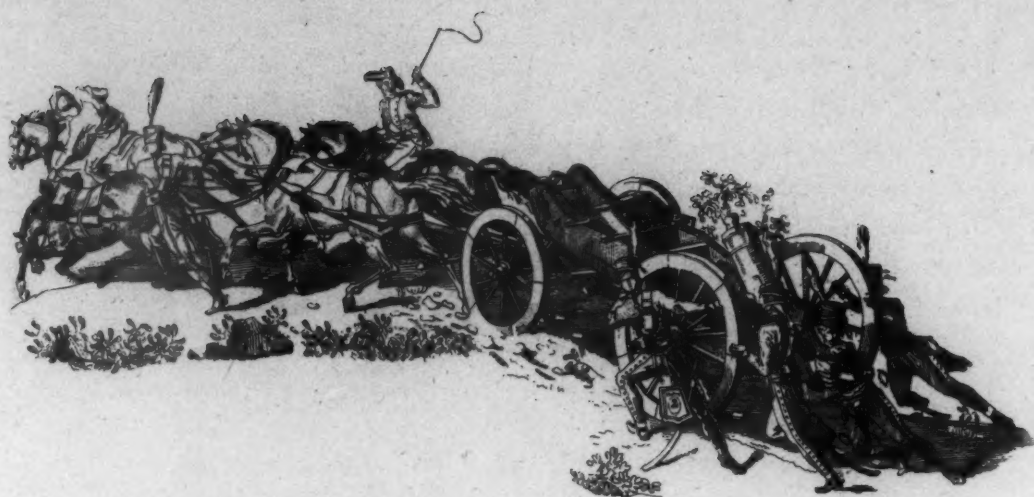
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*Friday, the 19th of January, 1872.* — The other day, at Notre-Dame, during the solemn service in memory of the victims of the war, a woman looked at the catafalque, pitched in the middle of the cathedral, and said: "To think that that represents more than a hundred thousand killed!"

LUDOVIC HALÉVY.







## OLD AND NEW ORDNANCE (\*)

Scarcely had the war against Germany commenced than the need for producing breech-loading guns became painfully manifest. Factories were established in Paris, and at Nantes and Tarbes in the provinces, for the rapid supply of guns on the pattern designed by Colonel de Reffye, the inventor of the *mitrailleuse*; however, only a small number of these guns could be turned out before the end of the war. The question of breech-loading was taken into consideration after the second siege of Paris, and as the result of the first series of investigations, it was decided, on the 16th of December, 1873, what the bases of the system should be, and these were determined as follows: the use of steel, charging by the breech and strengthening the barrel of the gun with hoops; two sizes of guns being fixed upon, the one with a calibre of 0<sup>m</sup>80, the other of 0<sup>m</sup>90. Matters of detail were thrown open to competition by all artillery officers, but events marched rapidly and war seemed impending again. There were in the arsenals a large number of guns having a calibre of seven (the weight of an elongated shell) constructed on M. de Reffye's pattern; a

(\*) See *Art and Letters*, for September, 1888. Vol. III, p. 273.

five-pounder of the same pattern was adopted and, pending the result of the competition, it was determined to employ these two guns in the formation of field-batteries. General Berge, then colonel, who was appointed Director of Artillery at the War Office, displayed remarkable activity and energy in manufacturing this material of war and in organising the batteries, and all the artillery of the nineteen army corps was armed with breech-loading guns by the end of 1874.

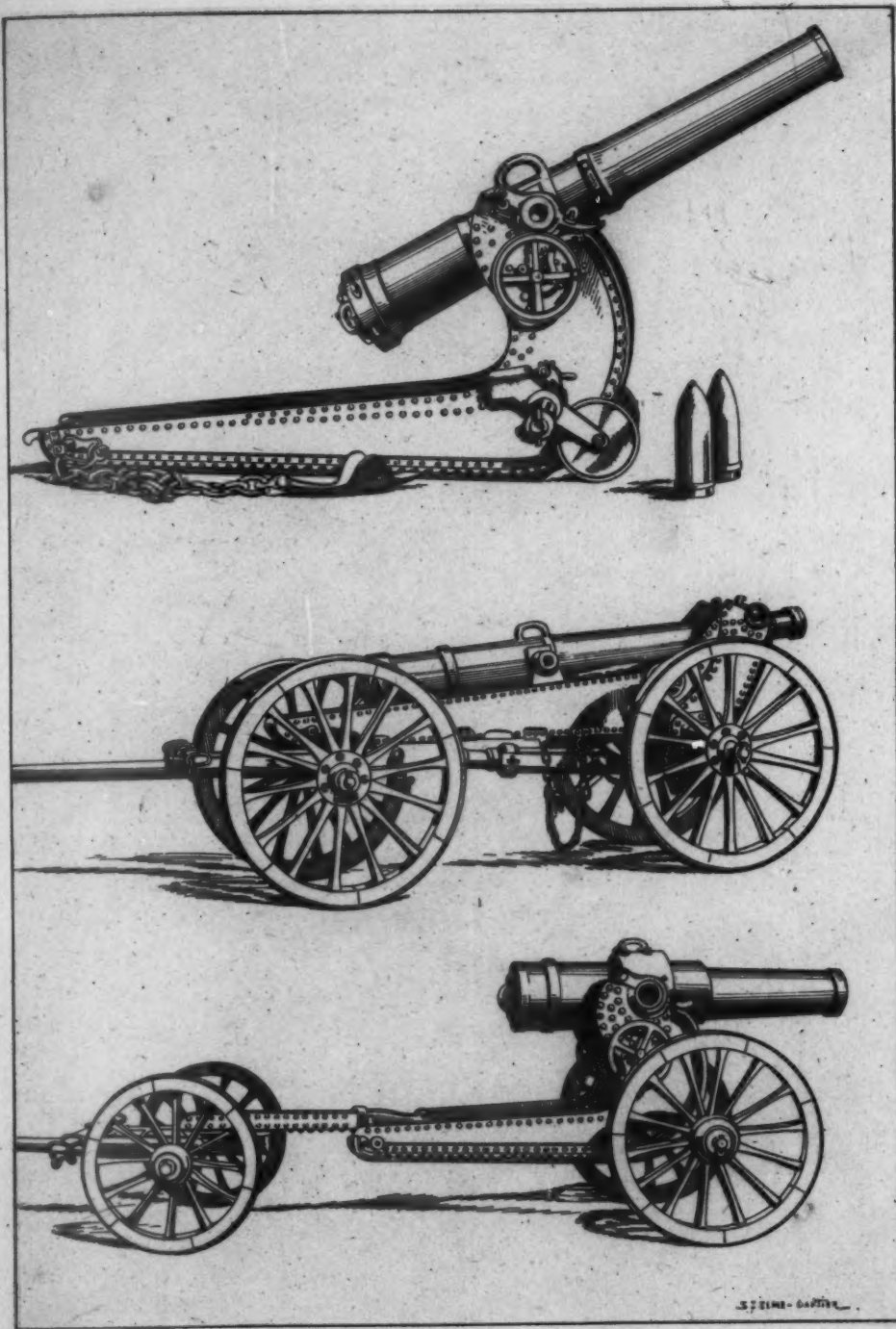
This mode of loading requires a method of closing the breech so as to render it gas-tight and prevent the flame from rushing back or escaping at the side when the shot is fired, as well as a means of forcing the shell into the grooves of the chamber. The method of closing which M. de Reffye adopted was General Treuille de Beaulieu's screw with broken threads.

If one supposes a steel screw having the same diameter as the inner cavity of the breech, and if one supposes that, in the sides of this inner cavity or recess, there are threads corresponding to those of the screw, one will understand that in order to close the breech the screw must be pushed forward and turned in it by means of a handle or key which is a long and tedious process; but, if the outer surface of the screw and the inner surface of its recess are divided into six equal sectors which are alternately smooth and threaded, it is only necessary to make the threaded part of the screw and the smooth part of the recess to correspond, and vice versa, to push the screw to the bottom without the least difficulty, and, by then turning it the extent of a sixth, to fix it in the recess through the action of the threads which are brought into contact with each other. The breech is opened by the opposite process, that is by the screw being given a sixth of a turn and being drawn backwards; during the forward and backward movement, and whilst the breech is opened, the screw is supported by a hinged shutter, a special piece of mechanism detaching the screw from the shutter when the breech is closed, or from its recess when it is opened. It is in the various forms of this mechanism that the principal differences consist in French breech-loading guns (the large navy guns excepted in which the method of closing the breech is dissimilar).













In de Reffye's system the recess in the breech is a steel ring, the screw terminating inside in a hollow space wherein is placed the metallic cup containing the charge, and this cup being pressed against the sides of the hollow space makes the breech gas-tight; the vent traversing the screw obliquely, enters the centre of the cup. The projectile is forced into the grooves, which are fourteen in number, by a leaden belt which renders its diameter a little larger than that of the chamber. The gun-carriages are made of iron. The projectiles for each gun are the ordinary shell, the double-sided shell designed to cause a greater number of splinters, shrapnel and canister; the charge contained in the cartridge used to consist of discs of compressed powder which operated like slow-burning powder, but now the gunpowder used in field-pieces has been substituted for these discs.

Scarcely had the guns on Reffye's system been adopted than the competition for the introduction of a new system ended in two being brought forward, the one having been elaborated by Commandant de Lahitolle, the other by Captain de Bange. After experiments with both on a large scale had been carried on by several brigades of artillery, de Bange's system, comprising two field-pieces having a calibre of 0<sup>m</sup>090 and 0<sup>m</sup>080 was definitely adopted on the 16th of December, 1873. Both competitors had most satisfactorily fulfilled the conditions laid down, and the deserved preference given to the victor was merely based on trifling differences.

De Bange's gun is formed of a cast steel tube which is strengthened at the rear by six hoops of puddled steel and at the muzzle by a flattened collar. The breech screw, with broken threads, is supported during loading by a hinged shutter; the mechanism is remarkable alike for its simplicity and certainty in operation. A moveable stem which traverses the screw, is composed of a shank and a boss head; between the boss head and the screw, the shank passes through a stopper consisting of a quantity of asbestos in tallow enclosed in tin cupels and held together by brass rings. The vent passes through the shank and the boss head, ending in the centre of the powder chamber; this chamber is a little smaller in diameter than the other and larger than the charge, so as to give more space to the gas at the beginning of the explosion, and to preserve the

metal of the piece from too sudden shocks. In a cannon of 0<sup>m</sup>080 the grooves are 24 in number and they are 28 in a cannon of 0<sup>m</sup>090; they are progressive, that is the portion of the spiral which they form, whilst almost rectilinear at the bottom of the chamber, winds more and more on nearing the muzzle, and it ends in a part of a regular screw; thus the shell acquires its rotatory movement progressively and without jerking.

The oblong projectiles are very elongated (their height being more than three times their diameter); a copper belt placed at the bottom of the cylindrical portion ensures their being forced into the groove. Besides canister, these projectiles are of three kinds: the ordinary shell, shrapnel and case-shot, which will be specially dealt with further on.

The carriage is made of rivetted sheet-iron; the screw employed for pointing, instead of supporting the breech directly, raises or lowers a double-headed eccentric upon which the breech rests, thus allowing the inclination of the piece to be altered within the widest possible limits.

A gun of 0<sup>m</sup>080, shorter and lighter than a field-piece, has been provided for mountain artillery and can be carried on the back of a mule; but its carriage, which is much heavier, is in two parts and requires two mules to transport it.

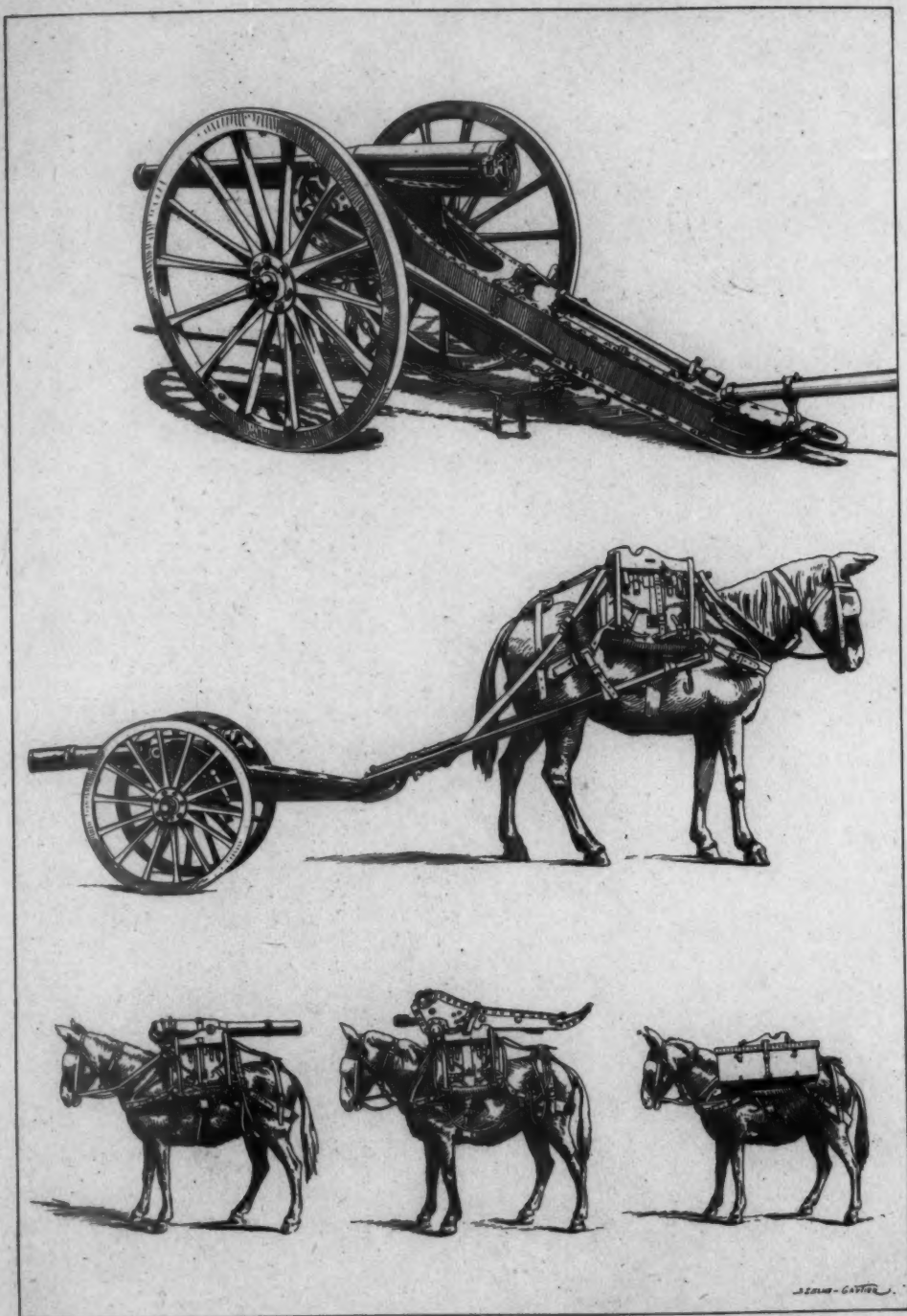
Before the adoption of Bange's system a renewed apprehension of war rendered strengthening the artillery of brigades compulsory in order to compensate for the inferiority of the guns on Reffye's system when compared with the German ones, which had been greatly improved since 1873. Now a model of a gun of the calibre of 0<sup>m</sup>95 was in existence which had been carefully worked out by Commandant de Lahitolle, and which fulfilled the greater part of the desired conditions, with the exception of the calibre: this gun was readily adopted and its manufacture and that of all its material was begun. In less than a year after this decision was arrived at, all the brigades of artillery were supplied with guns of 0<sup>m</sup>95, in the proportion of two batteries to each army corps.

The gun of 0<sup>m</sup>95 differs but slightly from one on Bange's system; perhaps the breech-loading mechanism may be rather more complicated, and the projectile, being more elongated, is not so well adapted for moving













through the air. The moveable stem is very short, and, what is advantageous, the vent, instead of being horizontal, passes through the surface of the reinforce, proceeding vertically towards the reservoir where it ends almost in the middle of the charge. The carriage is more substantial than that of the gun of 0<sup>m</sup>90; the pointing is done in a quite different way, being effected by means of a horizontal stem carrying a pinion, which works in the pointing screw and on two small winches which enable it to be turned as the pointer may desire. The gun of 0<sup>m</sup>95 which had been provisionally adopted in field train was withdrawn in the month of February, 1879. Latterly it seems to have been re-adopted as a piece for a fixed position.

The chief data which are necessary for making a comparison between the different systems bearing the names of their authors, Treuille de Beaulieu, de Reffye, Lahitolle, de Bange, and to compare them with the German system, are set forth in the following table :

SYSTEMS	FIELD PIECES	LENGTH of the CHAMBER in calibres	WEIGHT of the PIECE in kilogrammes	WEIGHT of the PIECE on the carriage and limber	WEIGHT of an ORDINARY shell when charged	NUMBER of SPLINTERS caused by the bursting of the shell at rest	NUMBER of SPLINTERS caused by the explosion of the shell at rest with chappot	INITIAL VELOCITY	AVERAGE FLIGHT with a range of 2,650 metres	AVERAGE FLIGHT deviation in sight at 2,650 metres
TREUILLE DE BEAULIEU	4 <sup>m</sup> 1/2 12 & 4	16,18 14,96	330 610	1,272 1,987	4 <sup>m</sup> 035 11 <sup>m</sup> 500	19 21	" "	325" 327"	" "	" "
REFFYE . . . . .	5 7	24,98 22,12	450 650	1,560 2,081	4 <sup>m</sup> 865 "	25 27	69 80	417" 390"	" "	" "
LAHITOLLE . . . . .	95" 80"	23,83 25,97	706 425	2,791 1,505	10 <sup>m</sup> 945 5 <sup>m</sup> 605	32 38	130 155	445" 490"	10.7 9.2	1.3 1.0
DE BANGE . . . . .	90" 78 <sup>m</sup> 5	22,93 24,00	530 390	2,010 1,800	7 <sup>m</sup> 945 5 <sup>m</sup> 089	35 "	129 "	455" 465"	9.7 14.5	0.9 1.4
GERMAN . . . . .	90"	20,72	450	1,940	7 <sup>m</sup> 019	" "	" "	444" 12.4	1.0	1.0

We have seen how imperfect Treuille de Beaulieu's system was for ensuring the bursting of a shell at a given distance, by means of a time fuze which was ignited when the projectile left the gun, and which could only be timed so as to ensure the shell bursting at one or two points. The question of the fuze is one of the most delicate of those which have been raised since the introduction of breech-loading guns. As windage has been done away with, the expanded projectile no longer allows any flame produced by the combustion of the charge to pass between its sides and

those of the piece; hence the fuze cannot be ignited in the same way as in muzzle-loaders (see Vol. III, page 287, the invention of mortars and the ignition of shells with a single fire); therefore it was necessary to employ a percussion fuze or a fuze which was ignited automatically on the projectile leaving the piece.

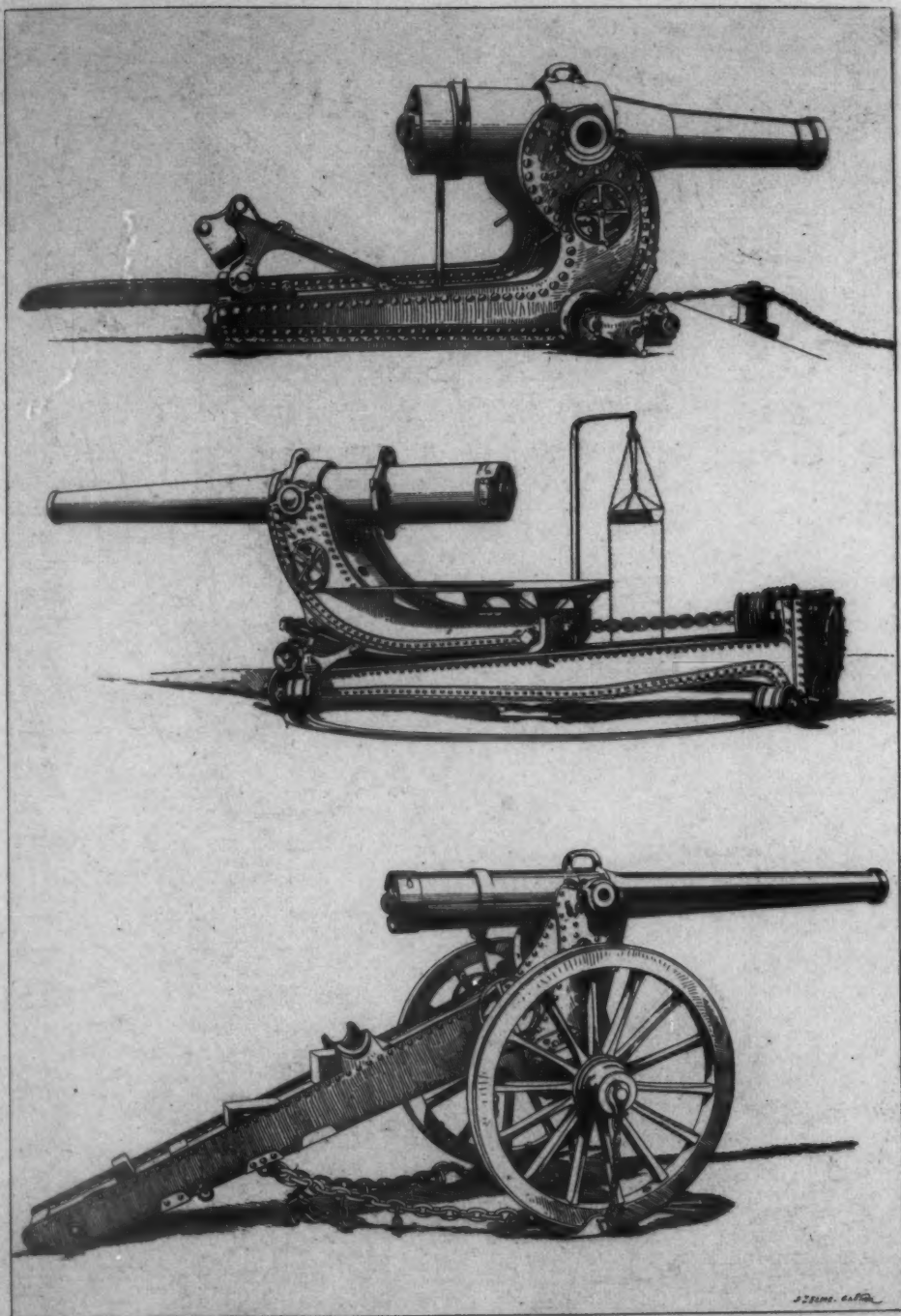
De Reffye's system necessitated the use of Desmaret's percussion fuzes which exploded by a blow; de Bange's shell was supplied with Budin's percussion fuze wherein the explosion is caused by the sudden stoppage of the projectile. This modification denoted a marked advance. The point of the projectile must strike the ground to cause the explosion of Desmaret's fuze; the wooden plug placed at the top of the fuze and carrying the *rugose*, is driven in by the concussion and strikes the priming contained in a capsule at the other end of the tube which is very short. The priming ignites and sets fire to the charge within the projectile. The action of Budin's fuze is based upon the principle of inertia, a principle which every one sees in operation daily without paying any heed to it. For instance, when a person stands up in a carriage, he is thrown back if the carriage suddenly moves away; on the contrary, if the carriage suddenly stops after being in motion, he is thrown forward. This twofold result is due to the time taken in communicating the motion or the cessation of motion to the person who is in the carriage.

Such, then, is the manner in which the properties of inertia are utilised in Budin's fuze, which is the regulation one in France for field-pieces. The *rugose* is placed on the head of a stopper fixed in the top of the fuze which, being screwed into the aperture of the projectile, is instantly affected by the projectile's motion and stoppage. The priming is kept in its place at the other end of the fuze by a claw-spring, hence all danger from the contact of the *rugose* and the priming is averted so long as the shell is not thrown. At the moment of the charge going off, the claw-spring is flattened by the recoil of the lump surrounding the priming and capsule; the distance is only maintained then by a spiral spring which is too weak to resist the forward movement of the priming capsule caused by the sudden stoppage of the projectile: thus the priming strikes against the *rugose* and is ignited.











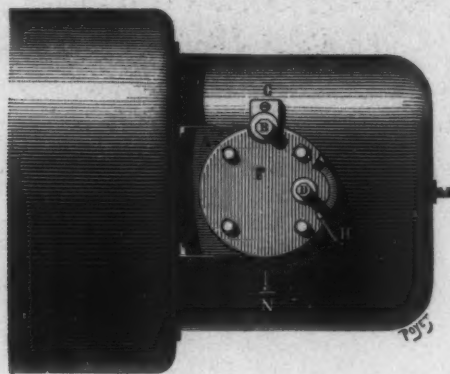


For firing with a time fuze a more complicated fuze is employed which is called a double-acting fuze, because it can be used either as a percussion or a time fuze as desired. As a percussion fuze it resembles the Budin fuze, the igniting material being enclosed at the top. A leaden tube being drawn out and charged with a slow-burning composition is wound spirally around a piece called the cap which is graduated to correspond to seconds or tenths of a second of time. It is sufficient, to ensure its effect at a given time, to pierce it at the spot marked to represent that space of time. The firing of the composition enclosed in the tube is caused by a small apparatus called *concutant*, which is analogous to the percussion apparatus, but which acts in the reverse way, that is the *rugose* and the priming are brought into contact at the moment of the projectile going off. When one sees a projectile cutting the air one never imagines, unless one knows beforehand, that it contains so much delicate mechanism.

The powder used for firing de Bange's and Lahitolle's field-pieces is large-grained and slow-burning powder. The same powder can be used in the cartridges for de Reffye's guns in the place of discs of compressed powder.

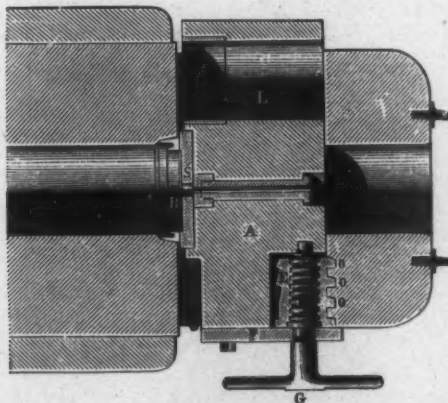
If we proceed to compare our fixed artillery material with that of the Germans, we shall perceive that the German system of closure consists of a wedge partly cylindrical and partly prismatic, which can be moved by a handle inserted laterally in the breech through a slot made to receive it, and presents the appearance, according as the breech is open or closed, of an opening through which to insert the charge or of a solid wedge. This mechanism being at the side is not under cover; moreover it necessitates, for the admission of the wedge, an opening in the strengthening hoop, which renders the piece less substantial; the German closing plug is a metallic ring which does not remain perfectly tight after a certain number of rounds have been fired, whilst the flexible plug system fits tightly against the sides of the recess; besides it can be easily repaired and replaced. An English commission formed at Woolwich to examine the breech-loading guns which have been reluctantly adopted in England, emphatically pronounced the French method of closing field-pieces as preferable to any other. The regular course of the grooves in the German guns is

objectionable on the ground that the projectile is thereby given a rapid rotatory movement at the risk of causing too great shocks, which are



Breech-closing system (German pattern of 1864).  
*Elevation.*

hindered in the French guns by the progressive operation of the grooves. The system of pointing by means of an eccentric is much more favourable



Breech-closing system (German pattern of 1864).  
*Section of apparatus in the axis of the piece and the trunnions.*

to the movement of the breech than the direct support of the breech upon a screw, and it has the advantage of increasing the area of vertical fire above the horizon.



The French piece can be inclined  $26^{\circ}$ , whereas the inclination of the German piece is limited to  $18^{\circ}$ .

The superiority of the French guns was publicly and indisputably demonstrated by what happened not long ago. The Servian government requiring to renew the material of its field artillery put the order, so to say, up to competition by subjecting to a competitive and severe trial the guns of de Bange, the guns of Krupp, the guns of Armstrong, and those made in Servia. As a result of this competition, the superiority of de Bange's guns was unanimously acknowledged by the Servian commission, and an order was given to Cail's factory for fifty complete batteries on that system. It may be noted, in connection with these experiments, that, out of the series of thirty rounds fired at a distance of 2500 metres, the Armstrong gun was speedily silenced, the Krupp gun fired thirty rounds in thirty-four minutes, whilst the de Bange gun fired the thirty rounds in twenty-two minutes; besides, great precautions had to be taken when firing the Armstrong gun, whilst the de Bange gun was fired without a hitch.

Nevertheless the effectiveness of shrapnel in the German guns and in general in foreign artillery rendered these guns superior by comparison with French artillery; yet French artillery has got the upper hand owing to the invention of grape-shells, for which it is indebted to the School of Pyrotechnics. These shells belong to the category of those styled clustered shells, because the bullets, instead of being dispersed over a large area, remain together up to a certain distance from the object aimed at, and thus they produce a murderous effect far away from the bursting point. This result is due to the internal arrangement of the charge according to which the bursting charge does not act in all directions, but chiefly in the direction of the flight of the shell. This is very important, because the approximate regulation of the fuze renders judging the distance a secondary matter. A clustered shell of 0<sup>m</sup>090 when it bursts on the ground scatters 240 bullets or splinters, whilst a shrapnel of the same calibre does not scatter more than 129. The results of firing at an object are still more remarkable: a shrapnel striking four targets of 40 metres in width and separated by 40 metres at the distance of 2,500 metres, placed 31 bullets or splinters in the four rows of targets, whereas a clustered shell at the



same distance placed in them 87. At 4,000 metres a clustered shell gave 106 hits after bursting 20 metres from the target. A shell fired at the range of 400 metres, and bursting at 170 metres from the target, gave out splinters which caused the target to be struck twelve times.

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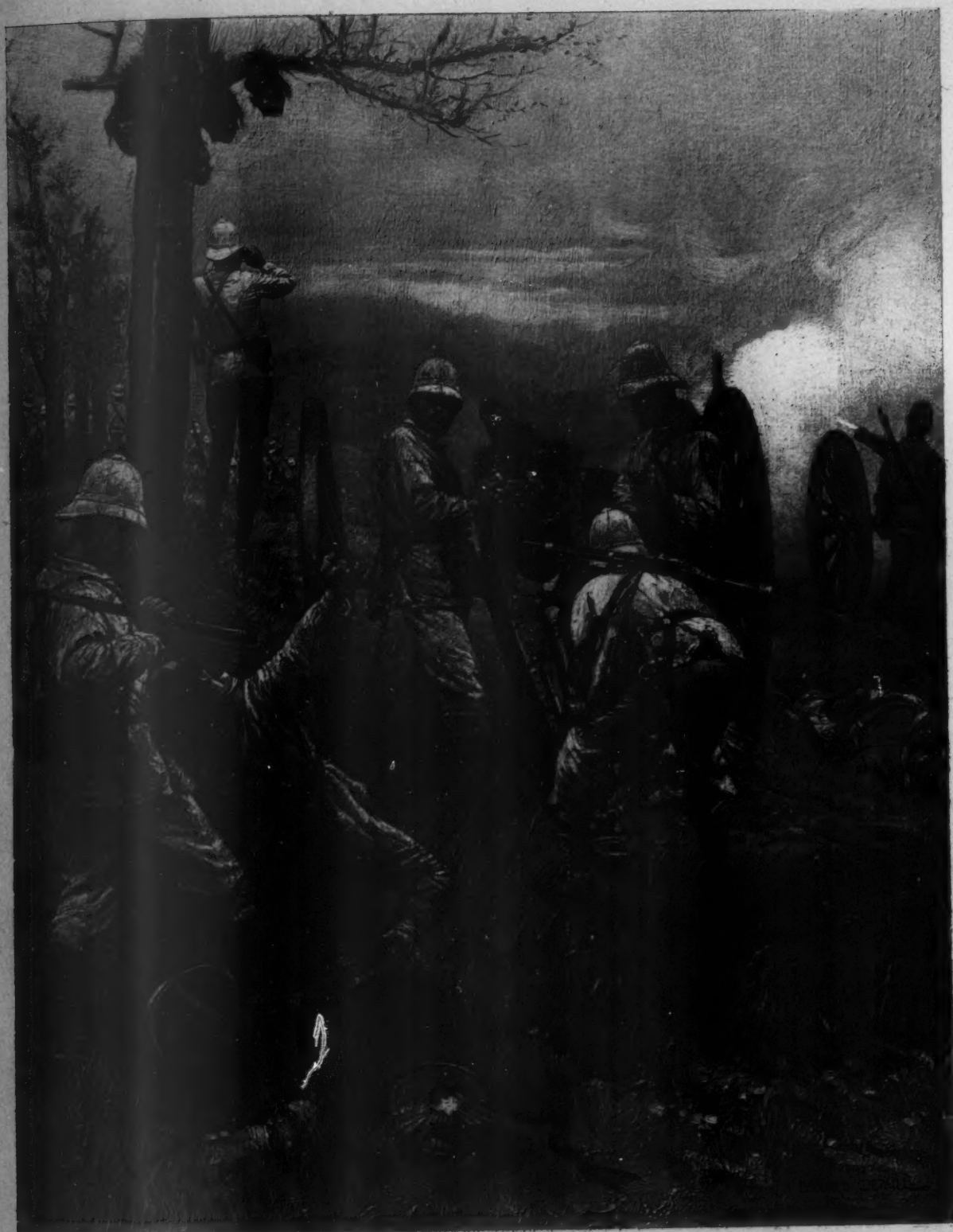
From Gribeauval's time to our own day, the material of siege artillery, both for fortresses and coasts, has undergone marked changes which are similar to those of the material of fixed artillery; as the result of successive transformations, siege artillery, in 1870, comprised old fashioned 12-pounder field-pieces rifled according to Treuille de Beaulieu's system, howitzers of 0<sup>m</sup>22 with smooth and short chambers, mortars of 0<sup>m</sup>32, 0<sup>m</sup>27, 0<sup>m</sup>22, and 0<sup>m</sup>15, and a short 24-pounder, called a 24-pounder siege gun, a piece entirely new and characterized by the equilibrium which it preserved through the support of its trunnions, whilst all the pieces which were known till then had a notable preponderance at the breech in order to avoid the sudden depression of the fore part of the piece which is produced by the passage of the projectile from the back to the front of the trunnions. Fort artillery comprised, in addition to these pieces, long 24 and 12-pounders rifled according to Treuille de Beaulieu's system, smooth-bore 24 and 16-pounders, and a long cast-iron howitzer of 0<sup>m</sup>22 which has been described above. Coast artillery comprised 30-pounders rifled according to the system prevailing in the navy, but which were muzzle-loaders. Loading at the breech is a matter of more importance for naval than for land artillery, as it permits the guns to be charged without drawing them back and without exposing those who serve them outside the port hole, and the navy had cast-iron hooped rifled guns before 1858 and 1860, some of which were breech-loaders and others muzzle-loaders.

After the war, the guns adapted for siege artillery, for forts and coasts were selected and settled provisionally. As regards siege pieces, the one first adopted was a bronze gun with a steel breech on Reffye's system, having a calibre of 0<sup>m</sup>138, and similar to the 7 and 5-pounder pieces, a gun which yielded good results at first, but did not prove











capable of continued firing. A pattern was speedily selected of two siege guns on de Bange's system, having a calibre of one hundred and fifty-five and one hundred and twenty; these were first-rate pieces, which, in addition to being easily handled, were most powerful in their effects.

The gun of 155 calibres weighs 2530 kilogrammes; its length is 4<sup>m</sup>200 and its shell, when filled, weighs 40 kilogrammes 500 grammes.

The gun of 120 weighs 1200 kilogrammes; its length is 3<sup>m</sup>250 and its shell, when filled, weighs 17 kilogrammes 800 grammes.

The carriage of the gun of 155 weighs 3255 kilogrammes; its initial speed with a load of 900 kilogrammes is 470.

The carriage of the gun of 120 weighs 1570 kilogrammes; its initial speed with a load of 4500 kilogrammes is 484.

A round of shrapnel fired from the gun of 155 lodged 2758 splinters or balls in targets of 4 1/2 at a range of 4000 metres.

Since then a short gun of 155 has been adopted, having a length of only 2<sup>m</sup>40 and weighing only 1023 kilogrammes; its carriage weighs 1123 kilogrammes; in other respects it is fashioned after the same principle as the long gun of 155; it is principally intended for firing at great angles, and at a low velocity, on a wheeled carriage.

Whilst the trunnions of the large gun of 155 and a gun of 120 are raised 1<sup>m</sup>945 and 1<sup>m</sup>800 above the ground, the trunnions of the short gun of 155 are raised 1<sup>m</sup>12 only.

Two rifled mortars were included as a beginning in siege artillery, the one of 220 millimetres, the other of 270 millimetres. The details of the first only are clearly settled; it weighs 200 kilogrammes; its carriage which is ingeniously contrived, weighs 2170 kilogrammes; the trunnions upon which the mortar is in equilibrium are one metre above the ground; the shell weighs 98 kilogrammes when filled, of which 6 kilogrammes represent the charge of powder.

The gun of 0<sup>m</sup>95 described above has also a place in a train of siege artillery, in which a single smooth-bore mortar has been included, this being the small mortar of 0<sup>m</sup>15, destined for use in close attack and defences during assaults.

Fort artillery comprises all the pieces of siege artillery except the



rifled mortar of 270 millimetres and, in addition, a number of pieces of an old and a new pattern which have remained in use, all being fired from special carriages.

Amongst the guns intended for a fort some are fitted for distant firing, others having a different and special purpose; they are destined for firing upon the moats and for flank-firing upon those parts of the fortification which might be the objects of an assault or an unexpected attack; they are styled flanking pieces. Special duty is required from them, that is discharging many rounds in a short space of time, and being capable of rough and ready pointing, or even of no change in the pointing whilst firing is going on. The old howitzers, all firing grape (the shrapnel of 0<sup>m</sup>16 contained 48 bullets, 0<sup>m</sup>37 in diameter), were employed in this work, as well as Reffye's *mitrailleuses*, but at present an entirely new gun is employed almost exclusively for flanking fire, and this has been also adopted in the navy for the defence of vessels against torpedo boats, whilst the torpedo boats are armed with Hotchkiss's repeating-guns.

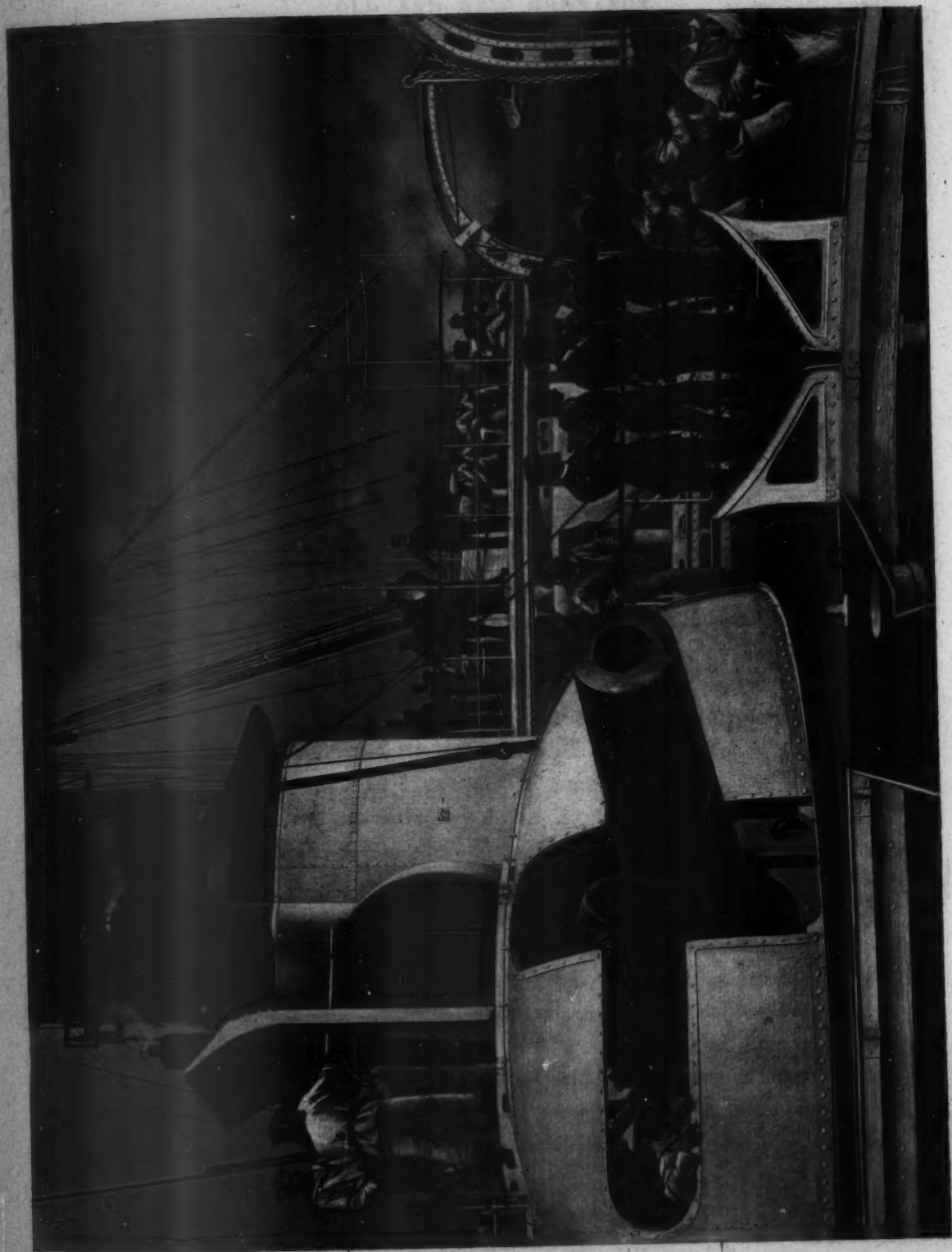
The Hotchkiss repeating-gun consists essentially in a cluster of five barrels turning on a central axis and in which the rifling differs in each tube in order to ensure different ranges, and in a piece of mechanism which is concealed in the surrounding cover. This piece of mechanism causes the barrel to revolve by turning a handle, inserts the cartridges, ignites the priming by percussion and extracts the ends of the empty cartridges. The projectile fired from each tube contains 24 hardened leaden shot weighing 32 grammes. A repeating-gun fires 60 rounds a minute. Thus it throws in a minute 1440 shots spread over an area corresponding in length and breadth to the moat of a fortress; the gunner is protected by a bullet-proof screen. That is the pattern adopted in France for the flanking of fortresses; other patterns are adopted in floating defences and on the deck of vessels, they have even been proposed for use in the field, but the reasons which militated against the *mitrailleuse* in 1870 are applicable to these repeating-guns.

What is curious in some patterns of repeating-guns is that they can be fired from the shoulder. A cannon fired from the shoulder is some-











thing novel, hence at the first trial there was some hesitation about using it. When the repeating-gun was tried at Gâvres, the first round was fired by a foreman of Hotchkiss's factory, the second by one of the managers of the factory, the third by a captain, the fourth by a general, and then others followed suit.

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The history of artillery for the navy and the coasts, during the last thirty or forty years, would require a volume to itself. This history is a tale of rivalry between guns and armour-clad ships, a struggle wherein metallurgical industry has achieved marvels on both sides, a struggle wherein the arts of peace have profited by the endeavours to perfect the methods of destruction.

The first ironclads subjected to the fire of artillery were the floating batteries *Dévastation*, *Lave*, and *Tonnant* which were sent against Kinburn after the capture of Sebastopol in 1855. Twenty-five and sixteen-pounder balls fired by the artillery in the forts glanced off the armour of these batteries.

Since then the thickness of the plates has been increased till it has reached as much as 50 centimetres; the calibre of the guns has been carried to 30 centimetres in French coast batteries, to 45 in Italian batteries, to 47 in English batteries; the guns on board a French man-of-war are as large as 42 centimetres. An English gun weighing 116 tons, being fourteen metres in length, and carrying a charge of 453 kilogrammes of powder, was tried recently. Solid steel balls and shells of chilled iron have doubled the power of these guns.

At present the coast armaments comprise rifled breech-loading cast-iron guns, with steel tubes and steel hoops, their calibre being 19, 24, 27 and 32 centimetres; a rifled and hooped gun of the calibre of 240 millimetres (a denomination used to distinguish this gun from the cast-iron one of 24), and a breech-loading rifled and hooped mortar; old fashioned breech-loading and muzzle-loading guns are also employed. Confining our remarks to the regulation pieces, their respective weights



are, for those of 19 centimetres, 7850 kilogrammes, for those of 24 centimetres, 16,200 kilogrammes, for those of 27 centimetres, 23,200 kilogrammes, for those of 32 centimetres, 39,000 kilogrammes. The steel gun of 240 on Bange's system weighs 13,980 kilogrammes only, but its price is 73,000 francs; the price of a cast-iron gun of 24 centimetres does not exceed 28,700 francs.

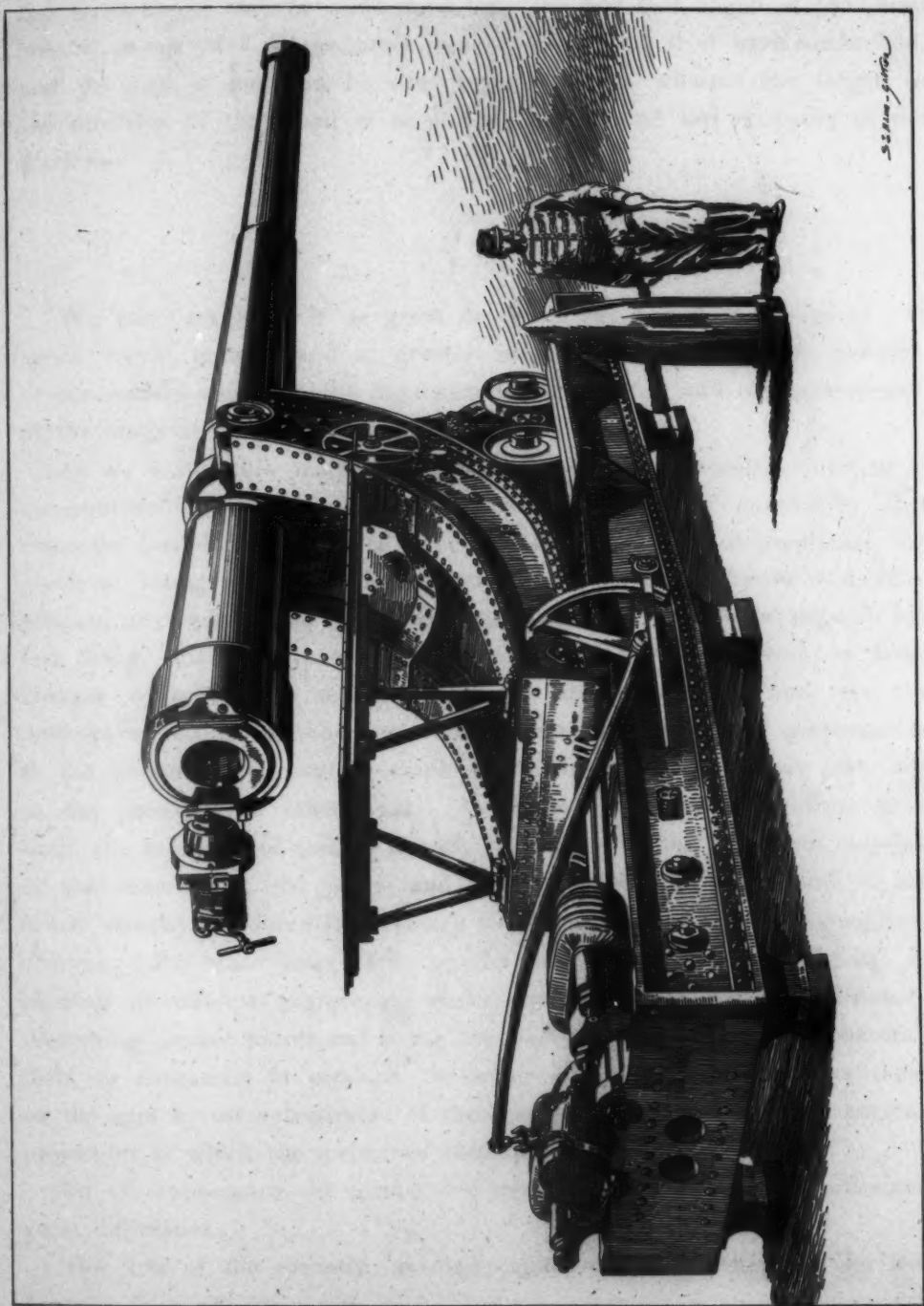
Up to the present time, the most noteworthy improvement made in the production of steel guns is shewn in Colonel de Bange's gun of the calibre of 430 millimetres which was sent to the exhibition at Antwerp in 1885. Its total length is 11<sup>m</sup>20, the thickness of the walls at the end of the chamber is 347 millimetres, its weight is 37,500 kilogrammes; relatively speaking this is light since the ordinary weight for such a gun would be 42,000 kilogrammes (it being understood that the weight of the gun of 240 millimetres is 14000 kilogrammes) and this lightness is due to the ingenious arrangements of hooping which permit of a diminution in the thickness. The carriage, with the buffer designed to limit the recoil, weighs 27,000 kilogrammes. The large chassis on which this carriage is turned about weighs 20,000 kilogrammes, the shell weighs 400 kilogrammes, and its height is 1<sup>m</sup>27; it contains 40 kilogrammes of compressed powder, the chilled-iron ball weighs 600 kilogrammes, the firing charge may amount to 200 kilogrammes; this ought to give an initial velocity of 640 metres and a range of about 18 kilometres; in other words one could fire upon Vincennes from Mont Valérien.

The carriages for coast guns and some of those for forts have recently been supplied with a buffer which renders it possible to fire the large charges which are employed to attain high velocities. This consists of a hydraulic brake, which is formed on the principle of the incompressibility of liquids, that is, their capacity to preserve the greater portion of their volume under the heaviest pressure: it consists of a piston-rod joined to the carriage and working in a pump cylinder placed horizontally on the chassis and filled with such a liquid as glycerine. By means of the recoil, the piston is violently pressed against the glycerine, the insurmountable resistance of which checks its further movement as well as that of the carriage with which it is connected. The importance of











the arrangement may be understood from the fact that a gun of 155, fired with a charge of 7 kilogrammes, would recoil 2<sup>m</sup>50 if it were unchecked, and yet such a gun can be fired upon ramparts whereof the length in the direction of the recoil is only 2 metres beyond the extremity of the platform.

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We have set forth in as great detail as the restricted nature of our space would permit, and at greater length, perhaps, than the patience of our readers will bear, the improvements introduced into the manufacture of the material of artillery up to the present day.

As we write, this material is in course of being transformed anew in consequence of the use of certain explosives. It is noteworthy that since the introduction of rifled breech-loaders the force of projectiles has gone on rising rapidly. It seemed as if the final objects had been attained as regards field firing with shrapnel, and as regards siege firing, fort firing, coast and naval firing, with huge shells containing as large charges of powder as forty kilogrammes and upwards. And yet the destructive effects of these projectiles were far from being proportioned to the weight of the engines employed to throw them, to their cost, and to the precision of other guns. Whatever might be the calibre of a shell, the necessity of making it with thick sides to hinder it from bursting in the chamber of the piece, and making its weight correspond to the initial velocity, rendered it necessary to diminish the weight of its internal charges. For some years back, powder had been displaced in mining, in blowing up railways, engineering works, and stone structures, by substances possessing greater power and being less bulky and weighty; it was natural, then, to endeavour to produce the same effects at a distance as those on the spot by the substitution of these substances for powder in charging projectiles of which the torpedoes used in the navy were examples.

To all appearance, at least, the solution of this problem presented great difficulties.

The first of the recently invented explosives which was tried for this



purpose was gun-cotton, also called pyroxiline, which the German chemist Schoenbein discovered in 1846, and which is produced by dipping cotton wool in nitric acid, or in a mixture of nitric and sulphuric acid. This substance, which has all the look of the cotton from which it is made, was the subject of a long series of experiments in France with the view of utilising it in cannon and portable guns, instead of gunpowder.

Its possesses the advantage, amongst others, of giving forth less smoke than gunpowder and not soiling the guns with residual products, but it, was supposed to produce too shattering effects and its use was quickly given up. In Austria, on the other hand, the results obtained from gun-cotton were so satisfactory that it was adopted both for loading guns and for charging projectiles. Practical effect was given to these experiments. The material of several batteries charged with gun-cotton was prepared for service and these batteries, being complete in all respects, were stored in the sheds of the large arsenal at Wiener-Neustadt. They were never used; a terrible explosion destroyed at once the magazine, the material and the persons who were handling it. As every one capable of explaining how the accident occurred disappeared in the explosion, it was a mere matter of conjecture how it could have been caused. Yet it was easy to account for the explosion owing to the fact that the presence of acids, however small in quantity, eventually leads to the decomposition of gun-cotton and may occasion its spontaneous combustion. However that may be, a considerable impression was produced by the accident at Wiener-Neustadt and it is scarcely necessary to add that the use of gun-cotton was given up in the Austrian artillery and the old powder was again employed, a powder of which the invention is rightly or wrongly attributed to the monk Berthold Schwartz.

Shortly afterwards, resort was had to dynamite as a means of utilising the explosive power of nitro-glycerine, an agent of the most destructive kind. Nitro-glycerine, an oily liquid, is formed by treating glycerine with a mixture of nitric and sulphuric acid, glycerine being itself a fatty substance which is a by-product in manufacturing stearine candles. Nitro-glycerine easily explodes when struck, but the risks attending its use are too great to make one dream of running them. These risks disappear

when nitro-glycerine is mixed with solid and porous substances which absorb it without letting any of it drop or exude. Thus the dynamite is prepared of which there are many varieties, such as neutral dynamite whereof the basis or absorbent matter is an inert substance, active dynamite whereof the basis can burn alone, like charcoal, cellulose, saltpetre, etc. The dynamite adopted in France for use in war has for its basis a very porous substance called *randanite* (on account of being found in large quantities at Randan in Auvergne); it contains 75 per cent of nitro-glycerine and does not explode with an ordinary blow; a fulminating priming is required to cause its explosion. But this substance has serious drawbacks: the nitro-glycerine absorbed by it may exude, in which case the slightest shock would be followed by an explosion, the nitro-glycerine is liable to decompose and then to set free a nitrous vapour and thus cause the spontaneous explosion of the dynamite sooner or later.

Moreover, nitro-glycerine freezes at eight degrees centigrade and under below zero; finally dynamite explodes when struck by a ball even at a considerable distance. The two first drawbacks are guarded against by taking precautions, and one can provide for the risks which may follow in their train by careful attention to it when in the magazine. Though deemed improbable, yet the substance will explode when frozen, provided that a sufficiently strong fulminating priming be employed as is done in France. As regards the drawback of exploding when struck by a projectile, endeavours have been made to avert this through the medium of various preparations, but complete success in this direction has not been obtained, judging from the accident that recently occurred in Italy, when the Prince of Naples as well as several officers were wounded at the time when it was intended to show the Crown Prince how harmless an explosive glycerine was whilst exposed to infantry fire, a harmlessness which was regarded as absolute, yet the experiments which were made proved the contrary. Such is the general result of experiments. Nothing is proved by a hundred negative results; they afford a presumption but no assurance of truth. On the contrary a single positive experiment suffices to demonstrate that a fact is possible.



In any case the drawback attendant upon dynamite led to a return in some countries to cotton-powder, but in a different form from the original one, being that of compressed cotton-powder, or gun-cotton. Gun-cotton is made by dipping cotton-wool in a mixture of sulphuric and nitric acid and then getting rid of these acids by mechanical means, forming it into a cake, and kneading this cake into a compact mass which will bear a pressure as great as 600 kilogrammes. Thus it is that the prismatic or cylindric cakes or discs varying greatly in shape and size are produced. As it is dangerous to handle gun-cotton in a dry state, it is kept in a moist condition (about 17 0/0 of water). In this state it does not explode, but it is sufficient to use a small quantity of priming to make it explode. Besides it does not stand such a shock as that of a rifle bullet fired at short range.

Quite apart from the risk attendant upon the keeping of dynamite and gun-cotton, it was impossible to think of using these substances for charging hollow projectiles; as these substances explode by concussion they would assuredly cause the projectile to burst in the chamber. But the chemist, who is fertile in resources, could not remain helpless in the presence of the fresh requirements of military science.

Various substances known or disguised under the names of melinite, roburite, etc., were simultaneously and successively tried in France, Germany, and Italy, and they gave results which may be truly called appalling. Shells charged with melinite, which is the name of the substance adopted at once in France, have a bursting power surpassing anything hitherto known; no parapet, no vault, no shelter and no iron-plating in a fortification can withstand them. Judging from the experimental tests, the strongest works could not resist the fire of these shells. The moral effects produced by the harsh noise of the explosion, by the whistling of splinters violently scattered around, and by the odour of the gas generated by the combustion of melinite is still greater, if that be possible, than the material effects.

On the other hand, this substance can be ignited only by special methods, which serve as securities against untimely explosion. Still, melinite is not the final product of the science of explosives. Even now







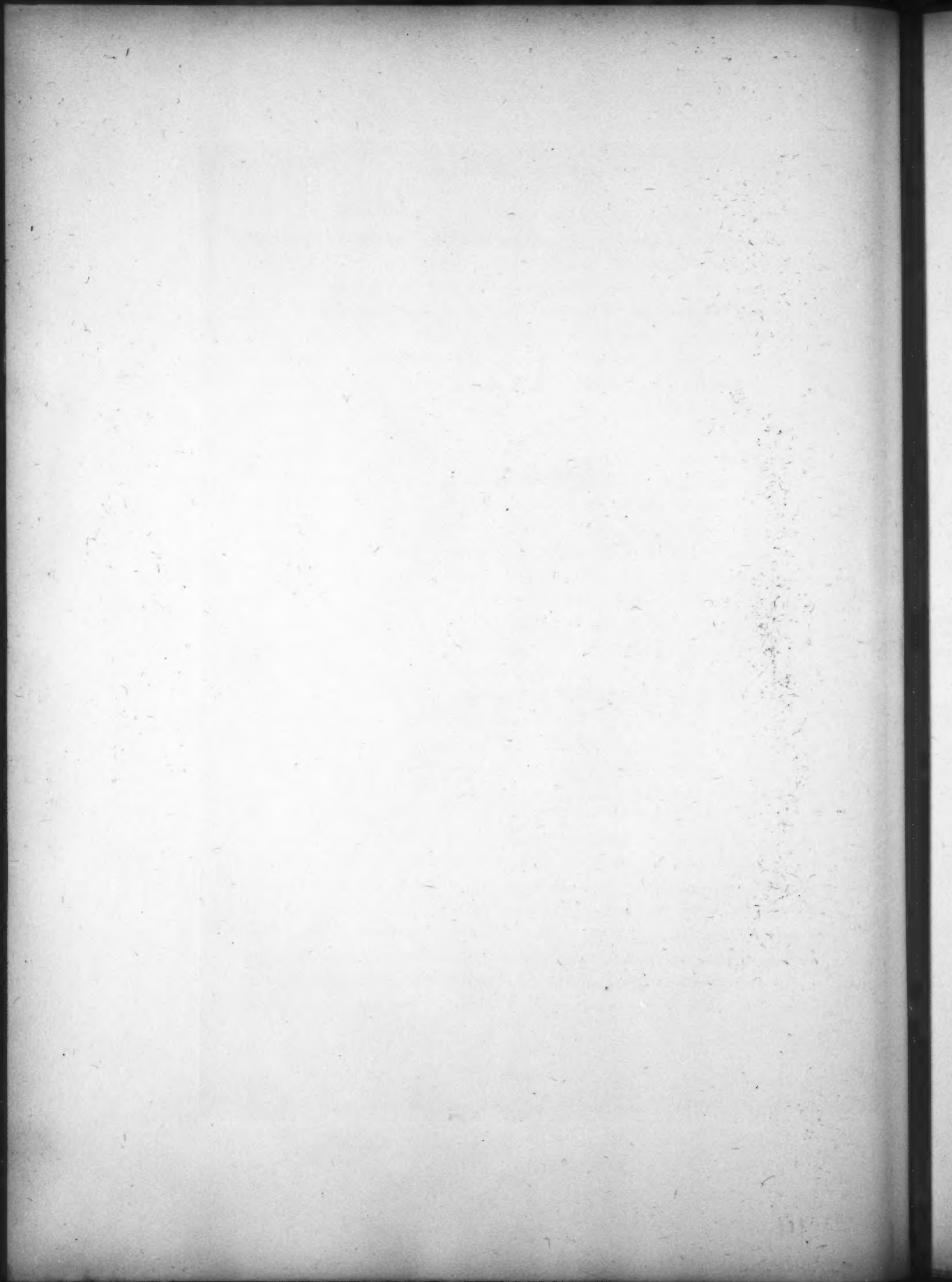
P. TAVERNIER



« À GAUCHE, EN BATTERIE! »

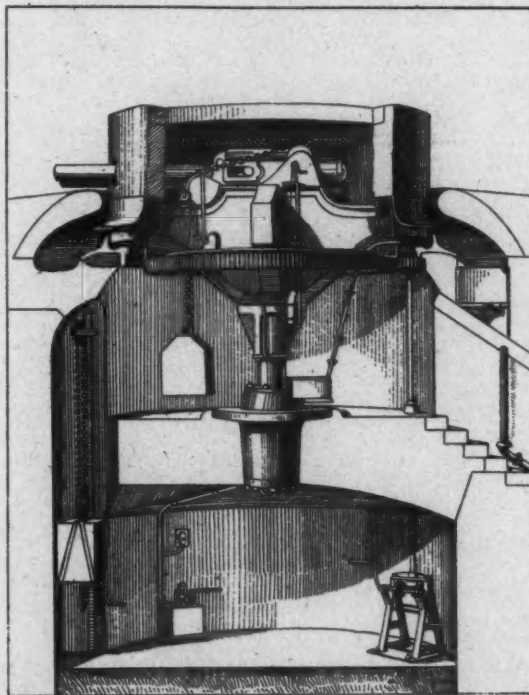
SALON DE 1888





it is said to have been superseded or nearly so by other substances which are preferable from the double point of view of power in effect and safety in manipulation.

However that may be, the adoption of melinite and analogous substances for filling the interior of shells has caused a real revolution in artillery. Field-pieces, or at least guns which are light enough to follow the movements of troops will henceforth serve to attack fortified places and especially



Armour-plated turret on Bange's system.

*As used during the experiments made at Bucharest.*

covering forts, which, in their existing condition, no longer serve as obstacles even to the enemy's advanced guard. It will no longer be necessary for armies to carry heavy artillery with them, except when laying siege to large fortresses. A light train, consisting of a few pieces will replace them advantageously. On the other hand, the new method of charging shells has had the result of entirely modifying their shapes

and sizes. Instead of oblong shells which were regarded as elongated when their length was thrice their diameter, projectiles are now made of which the length is six times greater than the diameter, and which, when used to load a mortar of 220 millimetres for instance, project beyond the mouth of the piece, yet without the correctness of the aim and extent of the range being affected, thanks to the especial arrangements made for the flight of the projectile.

Great changes of a different kind must be made in fortifications. In view of the effects caused by torpedo shells which is the name consecrated by custom for projectiles charged with the new substances, three different courses may be followed : 1° the works of existing fortifications may be abandoned as untenable ; 2° they may be strengthened, on the contrary, by increasing the thickness of the parapets and the iron plating, covering them with metal, so to speak, or else protecting them with a thick coating of cement or even of sand ; 3° retaining, as a compromise, the present forts as defensive redoubts, whilst protecting them as above indicated, and forming long trenches in front of them before which all guns could be moved at will along rails, these guns firing rapidly upon the enemy's artillery and getting out of the way to escape from the return fire. The arrangement of rails and carriages devised by Captain Péchot, of the Artillery, and now in use at Toul, is admirably adapted for movements of this kind.

The advantages of such a plan would be greatly increased by employing rapid-firing guns, engines which have been recently invented, and which no one has thought as yet of using except on board ship for which use they were designed. Revolving cannon which were first employed as defences against torpedo boats, had not a perforating power adequate to withstand these boats effectively. Thus the necessity was recognized of having guns which, whilst firing very rapidly, had a greater power. The problem was considered and happily solved. A new path is open for artillery by rapid-firing cannon, corresponding to that opened up for infantry by repeating-rifles. We spoke at the outset of the present article of a cannon of this kind which fired from 12 to 15 rounds a minute.



Several patterns of rapid-firing guns are in existence. The best known gun is that of Hotchkiss, in which the mechanism is modelled on that of some breech-loading rifles which are called block breech-loaders.

In the Hotchkiss gun, when the breech is open, the metallic cartridge is introduced consisting of a brass cylinder, filled with powder, and having the oblong ball at its fore-end, a half-turn of a crank then raises the block which both pushes home the cartridge and closes the breech. The gun is fired by pressing a spring, while a half-turn of the crank in the opposite direction serves to open the breech and throw out the empty cartridge case. Up to the present time this system has been applicable to guns of 37, 47, and 57 millimetres only.

For instance the gun of 57 millimetres has a length of 3<sup>m</sup>020 including the butt, it weighs 365 kilogrammes and throws three different kinds of projectiles, the ordinary shell, the breeching shell, and shrapnel; these weigh respectively 2 kilogrammes 722, 2 kilogrammes 724 and 2 kilogrammes 920. The firing charge is 885 grammes for each of the two shells and 810 grammes for shrapnel; the initial velocity of the shell is 560 metres; at point blank it can penetrate a plate 81 millimetres in thickness.

Four patterns of carriages are provided for this gun: the swing carriage designed for firing in a battery on board ship, the crinoline carriage designed for firing from the bridge, the embarking and disembarking carriage resembling generally the field carriage.

The use of repeating-guns is growing more and more common in the navies of the different Powers. It can easily be foreseen that before long they will form part of a field train. Horse artillery which is attached to independent cavalry divisions, no longer performs all that is required from it, despite the speed with which it can manœuvre.

In fact, these batteries have a double part to play; sometimes they must counter-check the enemy's artillery, but more frequently they have to support an offensive cavalry movement by concentrating their fire upon the opposing line of cavalry. The period of attack is very short; artillery cannot produce any effect in such a case except by keeping up a

well sustained and accurate fire. Now, however perfect our guns of 80 millimetres may be, they are far from fulfilling this condition.

Very curious details on this head are to be found in an article by Captain Bosch in the *Revue d'Artillerie* for March, 1886; it is estimated that, whether a charge be supported or repelled, and considering the distance at which the attack begins, the three batteries of a cavalry division can fire for three or four minutes during which they can discharge 54 rounds of which 18, about one-third, may be considered as well directed, on account of the necessity for adjusting the fire. During the same space of time, 18 repeating-guns firing ten rounds a minute only, would discharge 540 rounds of which two-thirds will be well directed, the adjustment, which is facilitated by a large number of volleys, being made in the course of a minute. In this way then, three hundred and sixty effective rounds, representing a total weight of cast-iron of 936 kilogrammes, can be obtained in place of 100 kilogrammes from the 18 rounds of a battery of 80 millimetres. On the other hand repeating-guns could cope without being at a disadvantage with guns of 80 millimetres in an artillery duel, the large number of rounds fired allowing them to play havoc with the drivers, horses and gunners, which is a surer way of silencing a battery than by seriously damaging the material; yet it must be noted that the projectile of a gun of 57 millimetres, or 6 pounds is too light to act against walls, and that the recoil of the gun interferes with the speed of its firing. Hence the problem as to the employment of new guns will be solved whenever one succeeds in applying this system to guns of a larger calibre, and also whenever one succeeds in preventing the recoil.

This result has been nearly obtained by employing brakes which limit, without completely stopping, the movements of the carriage when driven backwards by the recoil of the gun. But the real solution will consist in the application of ideas on this head to which expression was given many years ago by a captain of artillery named Treuille de Beaulieu. This captain was then treated as a visionary; at every moment nowadays one of the seeming paradoxes put forth by General Treuille de Beaulieu has a practical bearing. This is the grand revenge of unappreciated

inventors : unhappily it is always too tardy in arriving for them to enjoy their triumph.

Treuille de Beaulieu prevented the beginning of the recoil, that is the action of gas from the powder against the posterior side of the chamber. At present there is a talk of a new plan by which the recoil of the piece would no longer be communicated to the carriage.

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Will these deadly inventions, these modes of destruction to perfect which the human mind develops all its resources and industrial talent and all its power, lead, as has been supposed, to suppressing war on the ground that it would be too horrible? This is open to question ; but it is undoubted, as authentic facts show, that in the most recent battles of which several were savagely prepared, there were fewer killed and wounded than in certain battles during the wars of Louis XIV, Louis XV and Napoleon I.

At Seneff, the Anglo-Dutch, at Malplaquet, the Allies, lost 24 per cent of their effective force, to wit 12,000 out of 50,000 at Seneff, and 22,000 out of 90,000 at Malplaquet; at Kollin, during the Seven Years' War, the Prussians had 14,000 men killed or wounded out of 30,000, or 7 out of 15; at Kunersdoff, 20,000 out of 45,000, that is 45 per cent; at Auerstaedt Davout's corps had 7,000 men disabled, that is 26 per cent; at Eylau the Russians had 36 per cent of their men placed *hors de combat*, at Moskowa the French had 24 per cent, the Russians 43 per cent; at Rezonville, during the battle of the 16th of August, 1870, which is regarded as the most sanguinary fought in the last war between Germany and France, the German army had 10,821 killed or wounded out of 90,050 in line, which is equivalent to 11 per cent; the French army had 11,487 out of 136,900 that is 7 per cent. The corps which had the greatest losses that day, the third German corps, lost 21 per cent, while at Lutzen, Marshal Ney's corps had 13,045 men disabled out of 48,605; at Möckern, on the 13th October, 1813, during the battle of Wachau, Kleist's Prussian corps lost 6,000 men out of 22,000, or 27 per cent.

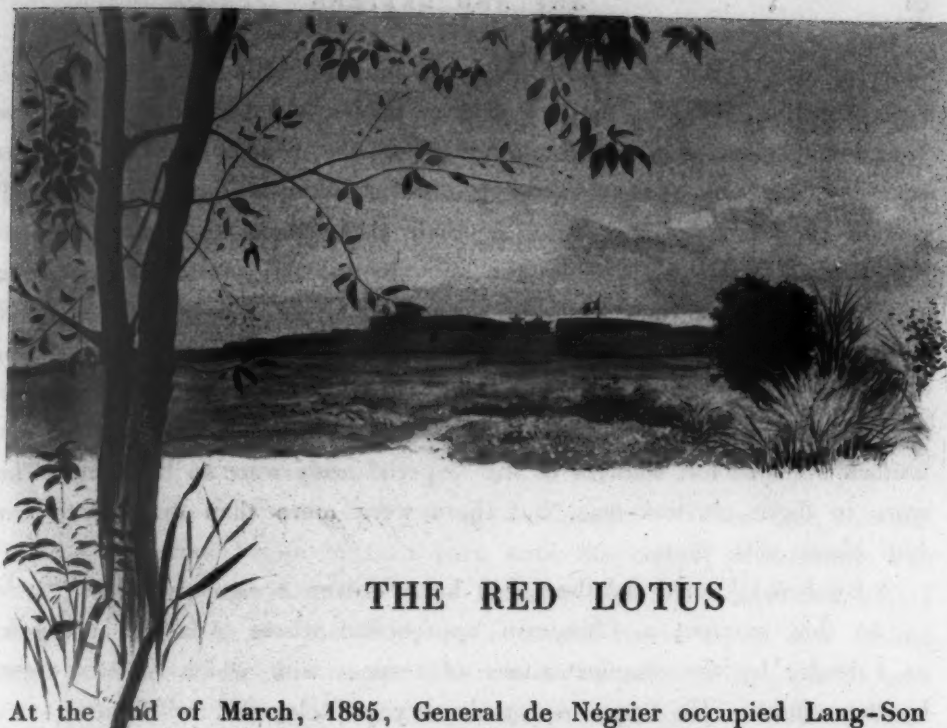


Shall it be said that the modern engines of war render encounters less sanguinary? To affirm this would appear to uphold a paradox; the truth probably being that, at certain points during an engagement, the losses may be very heavy during a few minutes; but, possibly, because they must be so serious, engagements of that kind will become rarer, and opposing armies will manœuvre so as to render the adversary's resistance impossible, as occurred at Sedan where the battle was nothing more than a massacre which was more glorious to the vanquished than the victor once the French army, surrounded on all sides, was hopelessly enclosed within a circle of fire.

If we add to this the gigantic outlay caused by wars, it may be affirmed on the one hand that they will not last long, and on the other hand that one will think twice before beginning them. The paradox is not so great, then, as may appear, when it is maintained that the immense improvement in the engines of destruction is an advance towards the realisation of that grand Utopia, universal peace.

THOMAS, General.





## THE RED LOTUS

At the end of March, 1885, General de Négrier occupied Lang-Son with a few troops who were worn with fatigue and illness, and every day he felt his position grow more critical. As he was too far from his basis of operations, he had difficulty in obtaining provisions, and dreaded being unable to sustain a siege in Lang-Son if the Chinese army, which was continually augmented by reinforcements, decided to invest the place. This eventuality was the more to be feared as the Chinese occupied a very strong position at Dong-Dang. It was necessary to take a high-handed course of action. The commander-in-chief resolved to capture Dong-Dang. It was not without a fierce struggle that our troops scaled the redoubts which defended all the approaches to the place, but their courage carried all before them, and no sooner was the French flag planted on the height than the little army crossed the "Gate of China," and on the soil of the Celestial Empire, set themselves ardently to the pursuit of the routed enemy.

The advance guard of the corps which undertook this risky work was commanded by Captain Adalbert de Kervadec, a young officer of Zouaves, whose ideas on the subject of tactics were very simple, but very decided; he maintained that in war one should always go forward. This

opinion, which was a result rather of his natural temperament than of ripe reflection, led him to go not only further than his instructions warranted but also to march in advance of the greater part of his own company, and by dint of running after the flying Chinese he passed a certain number of these, who, in their turn, began to pursue him. A gun thrown in his path made him stumble and fall prone on the ground, and before he had time to rise, twenty soldiers of the Imperial army had thrown themselves upon him, disarming him and making him a prisoner. When he turned to call his men to his aid he saw that he had not been followed, and as far as the eye could reach there was no sign of a French uniform. None but soldiers of the Imperial army were to be seen. These were in flight, it was true, but there were more than enough to carry him along with them.

"By Jove!" cried Adalbert, "I haven't even a cigar with me."

At this moment a Chinaman approached whom Adalbert recognized as a leader by the demonstrations of respect with which he was treated by the others. He began to speak very politely, but in Chinese.

"Good-day, sir," replied Adalbert, in French, "I hope I see you well."

The Chinaman did not answer, not having understood.

At an order from him the soldiers led Adalbert through a field of rice towards a little pagoda, the roof of which could be seen in the distance. Two men held each an arm, two others pushed him by his shoulders, four marched in front, and the remainder served as an escort. It was nightfall when they arrived at the pagoda. Adalbert was led into a little room, furnished with a few willow mats, where he was permitted to sit down on the floor. All the doors were guarded with an exhibition of force in proportion to the importance of the prisoner, and the Captain had time to reflect on the discomforts and dangers of his position. Other things equal, he would have preferred to be decapitated, even if his head were to be carried on a pike through the principal cities of the Empire; for he could not help thinking of impalement as a possible but unpleasant mode of death, and torture appeared to him an insupportable half-measure.

At last they came to fetch him; his hands were tied behind his back,



his feet bound together, and four men carried him out of the pagoda. The night was quite dark. A cart was standing before the door and into this he was thrown, finding himself lying upon a heap of straw. Then the cart started. It had hardly begun to move when he heard some one swearing by his side.

"What rascals these Chinese are! They don't even give one a glass of wine."

Adalbert felt a thrill of joy; he recognized the voice of his own orderly.

"Bonneau," he cried, "are you there?"

"Present, Captain."

"How did you come here?"

"Ah! how glad I am to find you again, Captain. When they sounded the retreat I had begun to turn back with the others, when some one asked, 'Where's the Captain?' I thought you were wounded and I could not leave you on the field, so I turned round again and looked everywhere, but there was no one like you to be seen. Then the Chinese came, thousands of them! I have never seen so many! I should think I must have killed quite a dozen——"

"Oh!" said Adalbert.

"Well then, three or four, I don't exactly remember; but I could not kill them all, so they made me prisoner, and here I am. What will become of us do you think, Captain?"

"We must get away," said Adalbert.

"Oh, I want nothing better; but how?"

"Have you your knife in your pocket?"

"Yes, Captain, but my hands and feet are bound."

"So are mine; but between the two of us we can manage it. Put your pocket near to my hands."

Bonneau dragged himself along so as to carry out this arrangement. Between the two they succeeded in opening the knife, and while the Captain held it, Bonneau drew the cord which bound his hands to and fro over the blade. When his hands were free he cut the other cords. The driver of the cart heard them talking, but did not understand them, and as long as he heard them talking he was satisfied that all was well.

"Attention," said the Captain, "it is not enough to be unbound, we must leave the cart without any one noticing us. If we were to jump down suddenly the cart would become all at once much too light."

"And then," added Bonneau, "we should be picked up by the escort."

Indeed, they could hear, a few yards behind them, the trotting of horses, the sound of voices, and further off, a confused rumble, as if a whole army were in their rear. But happily they could see nothing and consequently could not be seen, for the night was as dark as the grave.

The Captain and his orderly began to speak more slowly, lowering their voices, then they stopped talking and kept quite still as if they were asleep. The driver, while encouraging his horses, was talking to the soldier who was seated beside him in front.

The Captain slipped gradually to the back of the cart, and let his legs hang out backwards. When he felt the ground beneath his feet he still continued to lean his whole weight upon the cart with all the strength of his arms. Bonneau soon followed his example. Then they let go, first with one arm and then with the other, and walked for some time behind the equipage till they came to a turn in the road, when they suddenly sprang on one side, thinking they would fall into a field; but they fell on a declivity, and after rolling for a few moments were stopped by a bamboo hedge and were able to regain their feet.

All through the night, the retreating army defiled above their heads; they kept still and silent. At length they heard the sound of the voices and of the last waggon die away in the distance, and immediately afterwards it began to get daylight.

"Well, Bonneau," said the Captain, "how do you like this country?"

"It's a very hungry and thirsty country, Captain."

"Thirsty? That doesn't matter. Look behind the bamboos, there is a little river with water enough to drown us; but I do not see any canteen."

They had climbed up on to the road again and turned to the right, as the Chinese had turned to the left. After having walked for two hours they were still more weary and hungry, when they saw some people on the road, and had hardly time to throw themselves into a thicket before the stragglers passed. When at length they ventured to leave



their hiding-place they felt utterly exhausted. About a hundred yards further on they saw some buildings enclosed with porcelain walls, from the midst of which rose roofs, covered with polished tiles of all colours, their angles turned up in the air.

"Let us pay a visit to these people," said the Captain.

"But they will have us arrested again," objected Bonneau.

"What would you have? We cannot suppose that we shall be able to return to Lang-Son without encountering any Chinese. It will be better to have to do with respectable householders than to fall into the hands of a party of fugitives."

By walking round the wall they reached the entrance. The sun had risen and it was broad day. A gong was hung to the gate, with a little drumstick, the end of which was a pad of leather. The Captain struck a blow on the gong, which gave forth a loud and prolonged note.

A moment after, the door opened and a Chinese girl appeared. Perceiving two French soldiers, she began to utter piercing cries and fled towards the principal habitation, giving signs of the most lively terror.

"What does she say?" Bonneau asked in astonishment.

"She says she is afraid of us," the Captain replied gravely.

Then he closed the gate to avoid the indiscreet glances of chance passers, and advanced, slowly followed by Bonneau, to the chief part of the building where the frightened girl had taken refuge. As he was preparing to mount the steps, the door opened and a young Chinese girl appeared on the threshold. Adalbert saw at once from the grace and the distinction of her figure, even more than from the elegance of her attire, that she was a lady of position.

"The mistress of the house," he said to Bonneau. "Salute."

Bonneau made as if to present arms.

The Captain, with his cap in his hand, advanced bowing. At this moment the young Chinese fell on her knees, clasping her hands at the back of her head. Her small eyes coquettishly raised towards the temples, expressed childish terror, and her large, brilliantly red lips were advanced in a touching expression of prayer. The servant who had opened the gate stood behind her, still waving her arms and screaming.



"Silence," said the Captain in a tone of authority, looking severely at the little servant, who understood, for she was quiet at once.

Adalbert, with his head still bare, slowly mounted the three steps leading to the house, and with a smile at once gracious and respectful he said: "Madame, or Mademoiselle, I have lost my way in a country where I know no one, and I shall be exceedingly grateful if you will have the goodness to give me some breakfast."

Hearing these words which she did not understand, the young Chinese began to tremble in all her limbs, and not content with being on her knees, threw herself face downwards on the ground in the most suppliant attitude possible.

"I assure you that I mean no harm," added the Captain. He could not allow a woman to maintain such an attitude of humility before him, so he took hold of her gently by the arm, raised her with infinite precautions not to break her nails, which were of extreme length, then taking her hand, he led her back into the house.

"Bonneau," he said, looking back over his shoulder, "make the servant take you to the kitchen and get us something to eat as quickly as you can; try to make yourself agreeable to the girl."

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Although he did not know a word of Chinese, Adalbert had readily perceived that the reception with which he had met was certainly the result of some misunderstanding. These two women, who knew they were near the theatre of war, who must have heard the retreating troops passing all night long, and have even learnt from the mouths of some of the soldiers the story of their defeat, doubtless thought that they were in the presence of two soldiers of a victorious army which was continuing its course, and as they were alone, at any rate for the time being, it was easy to explain their alarm. Adalbert would the more willingly have cleared up this apprehension in that he felt it could not last very long. The Chinese girls must have indeed been blinded by terror not to have noticed before this, that their supposed conquerors were unarmed. Fortunately the soldiers who had taken Adalbert's sword had also taken its

sheath and belt, so it might be supposed that if he were unarmed it was because he considered all resistance useless.

Far from abusing the advantages given him by this position, Adalbert saw in it a reason for redoubling his attentions towards the amiable young lady upon whose hospitality he was forced to thrust himself.

After having led her by the hand as if he had been dancing with her into a tastefully furnished room which he saw facing them, he wished to make her sit down upon an elegant seat which seemed to occupy the place of honour; but, as soon as she felt herself free, she sprang to the other end of the room, took down from a trophy on the wall a long dagger with a hilt of carved jade and a finely pointed blade, then crouching in a corner with one arm raised and a wild expression in her eyes, she held herself in an attitude which signifies in every language: "If you come near me I will kill you."

She was truly beautiful as she made this heroic gesture, the violence of which did not exclude nobility, nor even a certain grace.

"Oh, the brave little woman!" thought Adalbert with a smile of satisfaction. He put aside his vest, opened the front of his shirt, and leaving his chest bare, advanced quietly to within reach of the hand which threatened him.

"Strike," he said, in his gentlest voice.

Thus she was made to understand that the Frenchman was not such a bad fellow after all, and letting the dagger slip from her trembling hand, she gave a faint smile, when, her eyes having fallen on the uncovered breast of the Zouave, she suddenly became confused, the hot blood mounting to her pale saffron skin in a most decided blush, and her eyelids fell so modestly that Adalbert no longer hesitated to call her Mademoiselle.

She allowed herself to be led to the large bamboo arm-chair which was covered with embroidered silk, and tucking her small feet, which were unaccustomed to so much exercise, beneath her, she looked at Adalbert. Terror having given way to curiosity, she seemed to take an interest in all the details of his uniform, and from time to time uttered little unintelligible phrases in a tone which was clearly that of interrogation.



Adalbert after having readjusted his dress, had seated himself beside her on a lower seat, and not being able to remain silent for long at a time, he spoke to her as if she could understand him.

"This is the first time, Mademoiselle, that I have had the honour of seeing a Chinese lady of good family, and I congratulate myself on the sequence of unfortunate circumstances which have brought me to your home. Do you know that your complexion is lovely? In Europe we have no idea of how becoming yellow may be, it is the colour of the sun, of which you offer so gracious an image."

At this moment Bonneau announced: "Breakfast is served, sir."

"Stupid," said Adalbert, "you ought to say, breakfast is served, miss! Because we are not understood is no reason to show lack of breeding."

"Breakfast is served, miss," Bonneau repeated.

Adalbert offered his arm to the mistress of the house to take her to the dining-room, invited her to sit at the head of the table, and seated himself opposite to her.

Bonneau had done wonders; he also had perceived the alarm which he inspired, and with his practised mind had taken advantage of it. By opening his mouth widely, and repeatedly making the gesture of putting something into it, he easily made it understood that they wanted something to eat. The girl, half dead with fear, then led him to a cupboard, where there was rice, tea, butter, pepper, and cinnamon in abundance, but these things did not seem sufficiently substantial under the circumstances, and he began to look so ferociously at her that she was forced to offer him something else. In a moment she had placed all the resources of the house at his disposal, with what remained of the last evening's meal. By mixing it all up together, and adding condiments which he found ready to his hand, he made a first course, in which rice predominated, but where the chopsticks which served as forks might make some fortunate discoveries now and then. This was all that was necessary to take off the edge of their hunger while waiting for the Cochin China fowl which he had to fry; a little dog killed the day before promised to be an excellent roast, which might be accompanied by a salad seasoned with castor-oil, according to a custom which is inof-

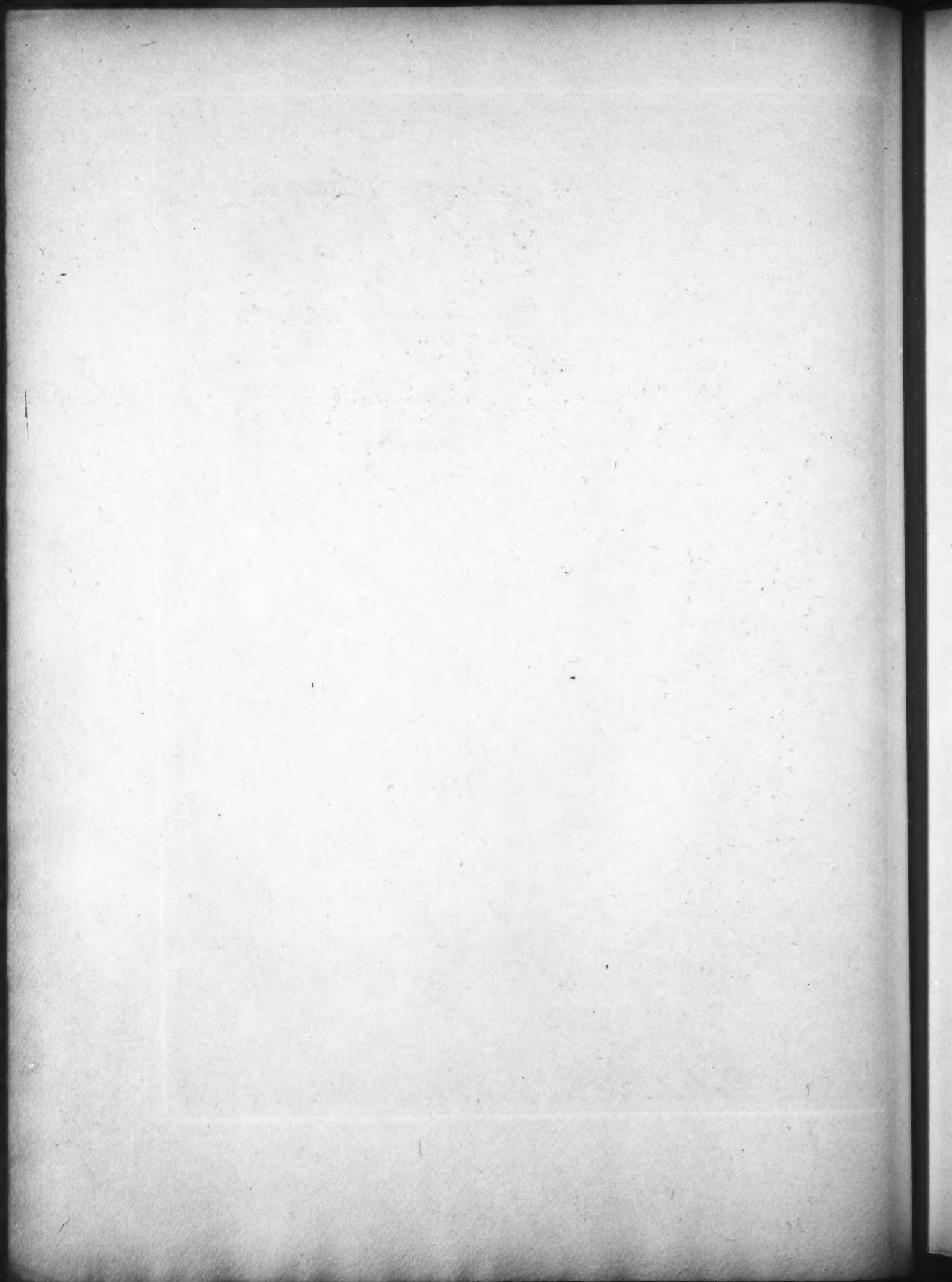












fensive in that country. He also found some bottles of curious wine, and some rice brandy which was excellent.

It was more than he required to make a very effective breakfast, and his spirits returned to him with the prospects of a meal, so much so that he kissed the little servant while she was laying the cloth. She made not the least effort to defend herself. Everything seemed to go on most satisfactorily. The Captain ate with a good appetite, all the while looking out of the corner of his eye to see how his companion managed her eating and drinking; he did not wish to look like a man who does not know good manners. Bonneau finished each dish as he brought it back to the kitchen, and they all had begun to experience a sensation of well-being, when, at a sign from her mistress, the servant brought some little pipes and tobacco.

The servant's name was evidently Tsi-tsi, for she turned her head whenever she heard those two syllables pronounced. Adalbert saw in this a means of entering into conversation. He looked at his hostess, pointing his finger at the servant and saying interrogatively: "Tsi-tsi?"

A nod of the head assured him that he was not mistaken.

Then pointing to his orderly he said, in his turn giving information: "Bonneau."

"Boh-no," repeated the Chinese with satisfaction.

Then pointing to himself the Captain added: "Adalbert."

"A-tal-feo," repeated the young girl several times, pronouncing the word as well as she was able.

"Let it be A-tal-feo then," said Adalbert. "And you?" he asked pointing to herself.

"Tcheou-ya-naï," she replied.

The introductions having been thus made, Adalbert was about trying to enter into more detailed explanations, when a loud noise was heard outside in the road. Almost immediately, the gong struck by a vigorous hand, gave out a loud sound, and Adalbert, from the place where he was, could see through the lower blinds the glitter of lances and a small Chinese flag coming from the other side of the garden wall.

"The devil!" he cried, "these people are evidently on our track."

"Well," said Bonneau, with philosophical resignation, "at any rate we've had a good meal."

At the sound of the gong, Tsi-tsi had made a rush towards the door; but Tcheou-ya-naï called her back at once, and after having commanded them by a gesture not to stir, she went herself to open the gate to the soldiers. Adalbert was not mistaken; an armed troop burst into the court-yard and it was easy to see that they were looking for somebody. Tcheou-ya-naï replied to them with gestures of denial, and as they insisted, she pointed to the house with a calm and innocent air, as if to invite them to search for themselves if they did not believe her. The officer convinced by this offer made his men turn back, the gate closed again, and the lances disappeared one after another.

"Mademoiselle," said Adalbert to Tcheou-ya-naï, who re-entered the room, "I owe you my life, and I shall never be able to express to you how much I am touched by the generosity of your action." But Tcheou-ya-naï did not understand. She gave some orders to Tsi-tsi, who appeared to offer all sorts of objections to them, but at last she had to give in. She pointed out a door to Bonneau, but as he did not seem to follow her hint to pass out through it quickly enough, she gave him a sounding slap.

"Oh!" said Bonneau, angrily, "what a coward she is."

Adalbert could not help laughing, but Tcheou-ya-naï, who maintained her gravity of demeanour, admonished Tsi-tsi, and taking her by the arm led her up to Bonneau, obliging her to assume an attitude of repentance.

"Good," said Bonneau, "I pardon you, but I will pay you out for it."

Tcheou-ya-naï and Tsi-tsi led Adalbert and Bonneau through the winding paths of an overgrown garden to an isolated pavilion, which could not be seen from the other parts of the buildings. When they had entered, Tsi-tsi placed on a three-legged stool of bamboo the lacquered tray with the brandy and tobacco. Tcheou-ya-naï indicated to Adalbert the limit which they must not cross and placed her finger on her lips. Then she and Tsi-tsi left them.

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The pavilion to which Adalbert was thus relegated consisted of a



vestibule and of a large hall ornamented with fantastic objects. The walls were covered with painted stuffs representing flowers, animals, and persons curiously intermingled. Between two rows of dragons in bronze and grotesque figures in porcelain, they passed to the back of the hall, which was occupied by an enormous chest of wood worked with extreme delicacy, encrusted with enamels, ivory and stones, which were doubtless precious, and surmounted by a crouching grinning figure, nearly the whole of which was of gold. Adalbert recognized at once that he was in the tomb of the ancestors, the most sacred of all places in China, a solemn refuge only opened on great occasions, where the solicitude of Tcheou-ya-naï doubtless foresaw he would not be troubled for some time to come. He assigned the vestibule to Bonneau, and arranged to camp out himself in the sanctuary. Through the narrow openings ornamented with panes of glass through which filtered the rays of the sun, he saw the surrounding country, and noticed with astonishment that the landscape was filled with crowds of men actively engaged in agricultural labours. Gradually the groups approached the house; from among them stood out a man of tall figure and ripe age, whom it was easy to recognize as the master, evidently the father of Tcheou-ya-naï. Then Adalbert understood why he had found the two women alone in the house. Every one was in the fields during the morning. It was now about mid-day, and men and beasts were on the point of returning home. Tcheou-ya-naï, whose kind heart had refused to give up the guests whom she had at first taken for unruly soldiery, and whom she now regarded only as prisoners to be saved, had evidently not thought that she would be able to make her father share the sentiment, and in hiding them she had provided against the most pressing danger. They could do nothing but await the course of events; only the waiting might be indefinitely prolonged, and amusements would soon have been wanting in the tomb of the ancestors if the visit of Tsi-tsi had not come towards the end of the day to enliven it a little.

Tsi-tsi was now very much at her ease with the men who had at first caused her the wildest terror; she was still tolerably respectful towards Adalbert for fear of displeasing her mistress, but she treated Bonneau with evident disdain, ordered him about in a brusque manner,

indicating to him by signs what he was to do, and ridiculed him. Nevertheless they obtained from her most of the necessities of life, and were thus able before lying down for the night to make a complete toilet.

When she returned next morning to bring the breakfast, Adalbert, fresh and lively after a good night, having made up his mind to find something to amuse him, said to her simply : "Tcheou-ya-naï!"

At first she did not understand him; but by dint of hearing her mistress's name repeated time after time, she understood that Adalbert wished to see her, and replied with a negative shake of her head. Then Adalbert took a visiting card from his pocket-book, turned down the corner, and gave it to Tsi-tsi repeating to her several times : "For Tcheou-ya-naï."

About mid-day, when Adalbert was lying stretched out comfortably on a heap of many-coloured cushions, fanning himself and thinking of nothing in particular, Tcheou-ya-naï entered. As he rose to receive her she bowed to him slightly, walked on towards the family altar, prostrated herself before the golden figure, and remained for some moments motionless, in prayer or contemplation. Then, having risen, she went up to Adalbert, and showing him the turned down card which she had received, she seemed to enquire the reason of this message. While he floundered about in explanations which were unintelligible to her, she looked at him with a coquettish smile which made her almond eyes still smaller, and caused them to shine yet more brightly. She had understood that Adalbert was getting bored, and taking a filigree key from her sash, she opened a secret door which was hidden behind some hangings, Adalbert followed her and found himself suddenly with Tcheou-ya-naï in a fairy garden.

A few feet from them ran a stream, whose transparent water, flowing over a bed of sparkling gravel, was shadowed by cypresses cut into various quaint forms. She made him pass over an ornamental wooden bridge and led him towards a leafy grove which seemed at first to be the beginning of a forest, but they had hardly walked a few steps in it before they came across a little valley beneath a green slope; at the foot of this declivity was the mouth of a grotto in the uneven walls of which rocky seats were arranged.



The path gave a sudden turn, and they found themselves again in the open air on the shore of a lake, on which lay broad lily leaves with a yellow flower peeping out here and there. This lake was fed by a stream, the course of which they followed for half a minute and suddenly found themselves at the place they had started from. All this variety of scenery, managed with art, to conceal one point of view from the other, was united on a small space of ground the whole of which did not occupy more than one acre. When she had shown it all, Tcheou-ya-naï seated herself on a stone which imitated nature, but was arranged in such a way as to form a back and arms.

Leaning forward in a graceful and easy pose, she watched the water flow, and seemed dreaming of far off things.

"What a pity not to be able to talk to her," thought Adalbert, "but never mind, it would be no good. What she would say to me would be of no importance, she would talk of her family and of her dressmaker. If she were a French girl I should not listen to her, I should keep near her for the pleasure of seeing her elegant form, her pretty hands and speaking eyes, to hear the music of her voice, and to feel that a woman's heart pulsates near mine."

Only, from old associations of ideas he could not be alone with a woman without wanting to make love to her. For a moment he thought of passing from ideas to action, and of making in the language of signs a declaration which she could not misunderstand, but Tcheou-ya-naï now she was serious, looked so modest and reserved that he dared not risk such a thing, knowing that he would not be able to explain verbally actions at which she might take offence.

From time to time Tcheou-ya-naï spoke without hoping to be understood, and addressing her remarks only to herself. Her small gentle voice, almost like that of a child, came to Adalbert like the breath of a caress on his cheek, and he felt a strange pleasure in this exchange of remarks to which no reply was possible. In his imagination he found himself suddenly transported to a castle in Brittany, where a year ago he had chatted with a young and pretty woman on the banks of a piece of water, under the same sun, with a similar sky, and a breeze such as played



about them now. Nevertheless the impression on his mind was very different. Tcheou-ya-naï was very unlike a Frenchwoman; her very person was totally different, the blood which coursed in her veins was not the same, and in her graceful head must dwell a world of strange ideas of which he could have no notion. What a strange and new sensation it would have been, to feel that this little Chinese heart beat the quicker for love of him. But there was nothing to indicate what effect he had produced upon her. Every time he drew nearer to Tcheou-ya-naï, curiosity seemed to be the predominant feeling aroused in her. She observed with a sort of astonished attention all the details of his accoutrements and of his person. On the whole the examination was not very unfavourable, but she often returned to his hands, as if she could not understand how a mandarin of high rank for his age, such as he seemed to be, should not have longer nails. She even made him turn his head to see how he managed to do without a pigtail.

Adalbert was amused at this inspection and took a great deal of trouble to show everything he had—his ring, his watch, his match-box. Then he took out his pocket-book, and she, wishing to see what was in it, found among sundry papers the portrait of a lady. At first she seemed vexed, then having regarded it more closely she smiled, looking alternately at Adalbert and at the photograph, which was the portrait of his sister. Tcheou-ya-naï had recognized the resemblance, and she gave a friendly little nod to the sister of her friend.

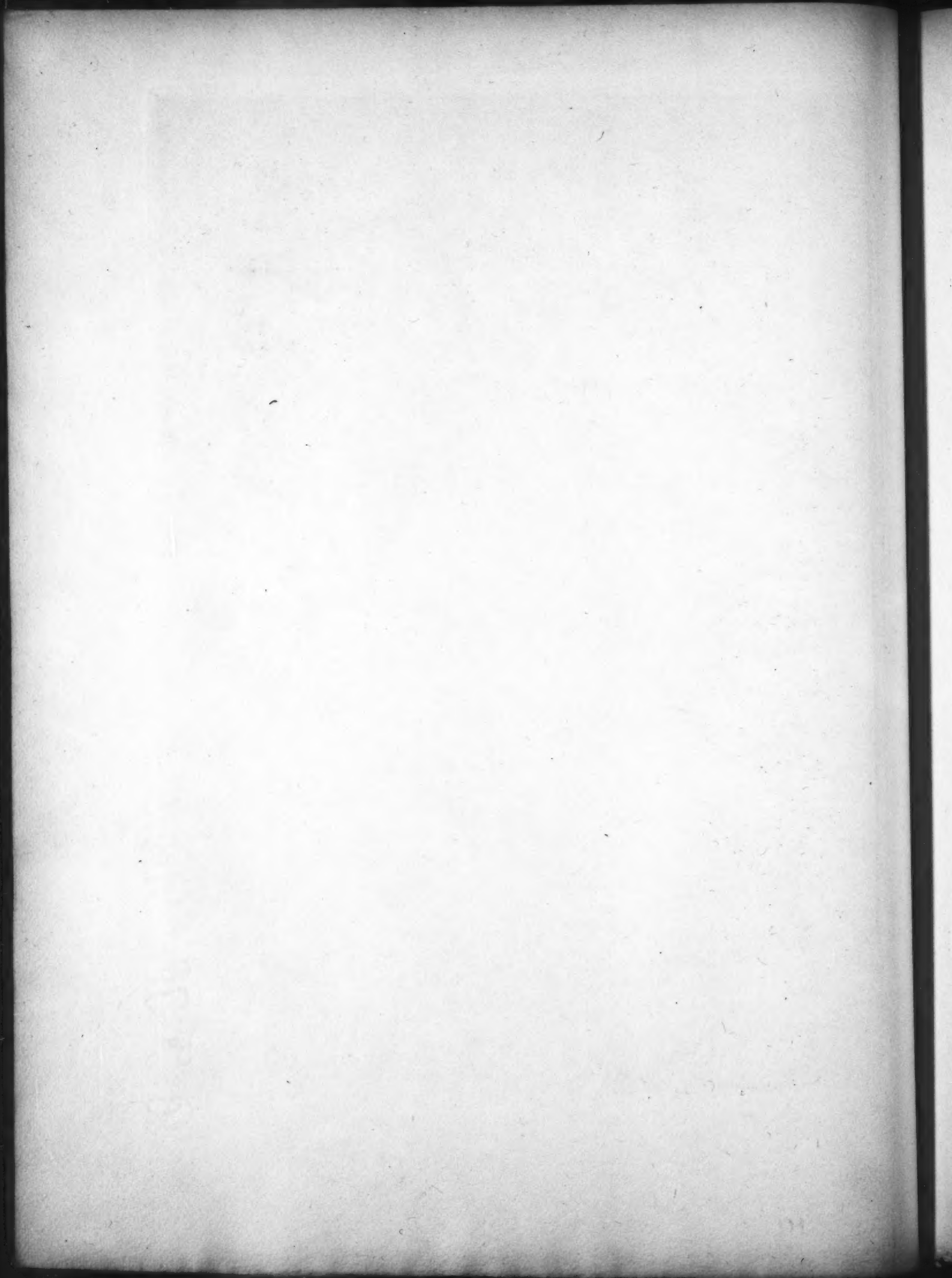
The whole of the next day passed without a visit from Tcheou-ya-naï, and Adalbert, who would have liked her to have come every day to charm his captivity, found the day long and dull. He passed nearly the whole of it in the garden, the key of which she had left with him, and in the evening he returned to it. It was a lovely night such as is found in the East, lighted by a full moon in the midst of a sky scintillating with stars. Adalbert had traversed the grotto and was seated on the shore of the lake, which glistened with moving light; he was oppressed by the peace and the silence of this solitude in which he felt lost, so far from his country and his flag, so near to all kinds of dangers, when a slight sound made him turn his head and he saw Tcheou-ya-naï standing behind him.











"Oh!" he cried delightedly, "how sweet of you to have come."

He took her hand, pressing it tenderly, and fancied he felt a slight pressure in response to his own. Tcheou-ya-naï pointed out to him the beautiful sky above them, as if she had come to share with him her admiration of this wonderful spectacle, and both began to walk up and down silently arm in arm, on the shore of the little lake which murmured at their feet.

It was not long before the temptation became too strong for him, and Adalbert tried to pass his arm round the waist of Tcheou-ya-naï, but she disengaged herself slowly, and motioning him off with a gesture, she looked at him vexed and reproachful.

"I beg your pardon," said Adalbert, "but it was so tempting." Having resumed their walk, they approached a cluster of lotus in bloom; two magnificent red blossoms stood out from among the others. Adalbert picked one and offered it gallantly to Tcheou-ya-naï, apologizing that he could only offer her her own flowers.

At this offer, Tcheou-ya-naï stopped in sudden confusion, the blood rushed to her cheeks, which were all aflame, and then it left them so ghastly pale that she looked ready to faint.

"Do you not want it?" said Adalbert, still holding out the flower for her acceptance.

Slowly Tcheou-ya-naï advanced her little trembling hand towards the flower, looking meanwhile right into Adalbert's eyes; she took the flower and began to speak in a broken voice, her breast heaving with some violent emotion.

"Yes, yes," said Adalbert, "take it from me, it will please me for you to do so, and keep it in memory of me."

For a long time they walked together in the clear warm light. Sometimes at the sound of an insect in the grass, Tcheou-ya-naï pressed timidly against Adalbert's arm; he had again taken her hand, which she now abandoned to his pressure. He even dared to lay a kiss upon it; but then she withdrew it, looking at him, however, with a smile half veiled in tears, in which there was as much happiness as confusion.

At length she led him back to the cluster of lotus, picked the beau-



tiful red flower which remained, gazed at it fixedly for a moment, and then offered it to Adalbert. He took it with a radiant air, kissed it gallantly, and placed it in his button-hole, on his heart.

Suddenly a bird of paradise uttered its sharp cry, Tcheou-ya-naï quitted Adalbert's arm, and without a sound fled lightly away.

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Bonneau had succeeded in making his existence remarkably comfortable; he wanted for nothing, thanks to Tsi-tsi, who had got used to him by degrees, and had not only ceased to tease him, but by every means in her power showed her willingness to please. Not content with bringing every day the necessaries of life, she added all kinds of delicacies, which Bonneau received without embarrassment, with a strong sense of what is due to the French soldier wherever he may be.

One morning, Tsi-tsi arrived without bringing anything. She raised her arms in the air, turned her head towards a distant quarter, spoke volubly, and gave evident signs of despair.

"What is the matter, Tsi-tsi?" asked Bonneau. "Have you upset the saucepan? Won't the fire burn up? Oh! I understand; your mistress has scolded you. She wishes to be more saving——"

Tsi-tsi pursued her explanations without success. Bonneau could do nothing but refer to the Captain.

"Something extraordinary must have happened, Captain. I have never seen Tsi-tsi in such a state, and what is more serious, she has not brought us anything to eat to-day."

Adalbert came himself to take stock of the situation, and was only able to convince himself of Tsi-tsi's trouble.

From her reiterated gesture of pointing in the distance, they were, however, able to understand that she was alluding to the necessity of their going away.

"I believe she is asking us to decamp," said Adalbert. "Probably everything is discovered. We have only to seek a shelter elsewhere." But when he took his cap and prepared to go, Tsi-tsi invited him to stay. They could not make it out anyhow.

At this moment a noise was heard in the neighbourhood of the pavilion. Tsi-tsi rushed out and had only time to hide herself behind a clump of cactus.

Through the open door Adalbert and Bonneau could see a crowd of Chinese, many of whom were armed, approaching them. At their head marched the man whom Adalbert had caught sight of in the field, and who could be none other but the master of the house.

"Bonneau," said Adalbert, "I am afraid we are not going to have a pleasant time. We shall have to show these fellows that we are no cowards. Above all, no cries and no gestures. In this country they only esteem those who appear indifferent to everything."

"I understand," said Bonneau. "They may say anything they like and I will not answer them. I despise them."

When the Chinese arrived at the pavilion, Adalbert bowed very politely to their chief and motioned him to enter; although the house was not his, as he occupied it, he thought he ought to do the honours.

The tall Chinaman seemed to be in a very bad temper; but he replied correctly to Adalbert's bow, and entering, showed him a paper covered with written characters and ornamented with several seals in orange-coloured sealing wax.

"It is evidently the order for our arrest," said Adalbert. After having for form's sake read this document, the big Chinaman with all his party entered the tomb of the ancestors. Much to the surprise of the Frenchmen, a number of little tables were immediately set out for a meal, and every one sat down, the big Chinaman and Adalbert sitting alone at the middle table, Bonneau being at another table with the leader of the soldiers.

"Ought I to eat, Captain?" asked Bonneau.

"Certainly," replied Adalbert. "Even if they poison us, it is about the best thing that could happen to us."

But no one was poisoned. The breakfast lasted only a few minutes, and had rather the character of a solemnity than of a meal. When it was finished, the big Chinaman bowed profoundly to Adalbert, nodded to Bonneau, all the party arranged itself in two rows, the officer invited Adalbert to come with him, Bonneau followed, and six soldiers closed up the rear.

The procession traversed the garden, defiled before the main building,



and gained the gate which opened on to the road. Before crossing the threshold, Adalbert turned towards the inhabited portion of the house and looked at the windows. A blind moved, was gently set aside, and the pretty face of Tcheou-ya-naï appeared in a ray of sunlight.

With one hand she held the red lotus flower, with the other pressed on her lips, she sent a long kiss to Adalbert.

"Where are they taking us to, Captain?" asked Bonneau.

"To Pekin, I suppose. They will make us camp out on a lawn surrounded with railings, in the Zoological Gardens, and all the people will come to see us cook."

"It won't be dull, but all the same I should have preferred to stay here; I was getting quite accustomed to the place."

"And you have souvenirs to take with you. If we ever get out of this scrape, you will be able to boast of having received a slap from a pretty Chinese."

"Yes, yes, Tsi-tsi," said Bonneau straightening himself up proudly.

"She has had to pay me for it, too!"

"Idiot!"

As they marched, Adalbert thought of Tcheou-ya-naï. Decidedly she was very attractive. It was a pity he had been able to carry the adventure no further. Was it out of respect for the duties imposed by her hospitality, or for fear of displeasing the young girl, that he had maintained a reserve far from habitual with him? He was almost sorry for having gone no farther than he had done. Yet it would have been wrong, he felt, to have done anything that could have possibly made the child fall in love with him, and anything serious between her and himself was of course out of the question, and not even to be dreamed of. He could not have carried off Tcheou-ya-naï and brought her to France, nor could he turn Chinese in order to marry her!

They had been marching for some time, the road wound in and out of fields which were divided into little plots, differently cultivated, but offering only a monotonous landscape, when, at a sudden turn, Adalbert cried out: "Why, I seem to have been here before."

"Yes, do you see this mound; it is where I was taken prisoner."



"And I was taken in this ravine. They are taking us to the outposts."

Indeed they soon perceived the "Gate of China," and when they had arrived there the Chinese officer paused. He made his men present arms, pointed out the road to Lang-Son to the two prisoners, bowed, and ordered his party to turn back. Adalbert and Bonneau had only to cross the "Gate of China," to find themselves on the territory of Tonkin. Soon after, they met some French soldiers who told them what had happened.

Peace had been signed. After the affair of Lang-Son, while the Chinese beat a retreat on Canton, the French had doubled and taken possession of Dong-Dang, but as the battle had taken place after the treaty was signed, it was considered as null. The hostilities were at an end, and prisoners were exchanged.

A year later, Adalbert had returned to France, and thought no more about Tcheou-ya-naï, when at a ball, he met the General Li-fao-Kang, attaché of the Chinese Embassy to France and England. They conversed the more easily because the Chinese war had left no serious feeling of animosity between the belligerents, and in the course of conversation Adalbert chanced to praise the Chinese ladies.

"You would have found them still more charming," said the General Li-fao-Kang, "if you could have known them intimately."

"At any rate," replied Adalbert, "I have known one intimately enough to have exchanged a lotus flower with her."

"A red one?" asked Li-fao-Kang, smiling.

"Yes, a red one."

"Oh!" said the General, seeming at the same time shocked and incredulous, "you may have ventured to offer her a red lotus flower, and it is just possible that she may have accepted it, but try to remember; I cannot think she would have given you one in exchange."

"As it happened," said Adalbert, "I can show it to you. I confess that for a whole year, I have kept it always about me."

"Yes," said the General, "it is a red lotus flower. Well, sir, you are engaged."

"How engaged? I have never promised anything."

"In the Province of Kouang-Si, if a young girl exchanges a red lotus

flower with a young man, she vows herself to him for her whole life. There is no instance of such an engagement ever having been broken."

"But how was I to know this?" said Adalbert.

He has never returned to China; but every now and then, in the midst of a hunting party or an evening spent in pleasure, his friends notice that he has moments of distraction, during which he neither sees or hears anything that is going on about him. He is thinking of his young *fiancée*, who has such soft little hands with their long nails; he thinks he sees her still on the shore of the little lake by moonlight, her eyes, the corners of which rise towards her temples, shine with humid light, her bright red lips, half opened, seem ready for a kiss, a subtle odour of sandal exhales from her glossy black hair. She gazes on the red lotus flower, long since faded, and waits, as she will wait for ever, knowing not why her lover has never returned to her.

GASTON BERGERET.





## DEJANIRA

On the evening of the 12th of June, 1769, the large boat surmounted by a cabin with glass windows, which crosses to and fro between Venice and Padua, and which is called the Burchiello, left Venice loaded with as many passengers as she could possibly take on board. Her crowded state was explained by the fact that the fair of St. Anthony opened on the following day.

Amongst the travellers seated in the public cabin, were an Augustine friar, a major on his way to raise recruits on *terra firma*, a few quiet merchants, and two pretty actresses, who fidgeted a great deal, and then apologized with great politeness to their neighbours for the inconvenience which they caused them.

A young man, wrapped in a cloak of black lustring, made himself noticeable amongst this assembly, by more aristocratic manners than those of his companions. He had a good figure, a bright face, and eyes sparkling with youth and joyousness. By the smoky light of the lantern which illuminated the interior of the Burchiello, one could see that his eyes were brown. His hair appeared to be black beneath the powder which covered it.



The actresses declared that he was charming, and whispered it to one another loud enough for him to be able to hear what they said; it did not seem to displease him in the least. He became the object of their teasing remarks, to which he returned witty answers, and a war of jests, those pretty Venetian jests, which combine raillery and compliments, ensued between them.

The major, vexed at the small amount of attention paid to him, had gone outside to smoke a big German pipe. The monk, who took no part in the conversation, mumbled his evening service. The evening passed quickly, but little by little the conversation flagged, and there was a silence. The actresses continued munching caramels for a time (they had not ceased this occupation since the boat left Venice). The major was still smoking on deck, and the monk murmuring his prayers. At length every one fell asleep, and only awakened when the sun stood quite high in the heavens.

Sleep had somewhat destroyed the freshness of the two actresses; their rouge had paled off in spots, and they appeared somewhat less young than they had looked on the preceding day. But their fine eyes, white teeth, and a continual expression of good humour prevented any one from thinking them ugly.

As for the young man, who had engaged for the night one of the cabins situated at the end of the Burchiello, he, on the contrary, came forth looking very smart, clean shaven and freshly powdered, resplendent in a dove-coloured coat.

"I did not want to lose any time on my arrival," he said, "as I should not like to miss a single measure of the mass at the Santo."

"You might say," corrected the monk gently, "that you should not like to miss one of the prayers."

"Excuse me, Father, if I do not seem very respectful, but I am a musician, and I know that a mass by Jomelli is to be executed this morning at the Santo, under the direction of the Maestro Tartini, who is to play a new sonata of his own composition during the offertory."

"So music is the object of your pilgrimage during this holiday?"

"Yes, I confess it, Father, and as I have heard that the place of

first violinist of the Chapel of Sant' Antonio, which is vacant, will be competed for to-morrow, I have the boldness" (here he bowed modestly), "to try my strength with the pupils of the illustrious Tartini."

"Allow me to say, my son, that it is a great piece of presumption."

"That would be my opinion also, but in Venice my masters persuaded me to make the attempt, saying that ten years of study and a little natural genius had placed me in a position to do so."

"May God prevent your ever repenting what you are about to undertake. I do not wish to be a bird of ill-omen, but if you fail, your pride will suffer, and if you succeed, you will have as many enemies to fight against as you supplant rivals."

"Oh, what do I care, on the word of Zani Trivelli! As long as I succeed in the competition, the rest of the matter has nothing to do with me," he cried gaily, and a gleam of youth and confidence came into his eyes.

"God protect him," thought the monk. "He has youth, he has beauty, and he has talent also, they are more than enough to raise up many envious men against him."

The Burchiello was gliding rapidly on, between the lovely shores of the Brenta, amidst poplars intertwined with vine-branches, which were still green, and the beautiful villas built by Scamozzi, San Micheli, the Palladio. Already at this early date they had a faded look. Everywhere, amidst flowers and fruit-trees, were marble balustrades, vases mostly broken, and statues, nearly all of which were defaced. Near the Coda Lunga Gate the Burchiello stopped, and all the passengers landed. Zani took his violin case and a small box ornamented with large birds of Paradise painted on an azure background, and confided them to the care of one the *facchini* who were waiting at the landing place. He himself turned with hasty step in the direction of the church, which encloses the tomb of the Saint, and the numerous bells of which were ringing a full peal.

\* \* \*

The interior of Sant' Antonio's is a museum of riches of all periods of art, from the genealogy of Christ painted by Giotto, to sculptured



skeletons in the most affected attitudes, introduced by the bad taste of the eighteenth century. The accumulation of monuments, statues, gilding, the silver lamps hanging on all sides, deprive this great edifice, half-Gothic, half-Byzantine, of every vestige of style.

The church is much larger than that of St. Mark in Venice, and in spite of the assembled crowd, it appeared half-empty when Zani Trivelli entered. The people were all thronging beneath the central dome, where stands the altar before which the morning mass was being said. Against the four pillars supporting the dome are four galleries, each surmounted by a large gilded organ. Several choirs and an instrumental orchestra occupied these four galleries. The office began with a march executed on the four organs. They answered each other, with variations on the principal motive, and ended by uniting in a triumphal hymn. The march was succeeded by chants, in which the voice of the famous soprano Mingotti mingled with a strange charm with the voices of the children, the tenors and the bassi.

Zani Trivelli was enchanted, and gave vent to his joy in suppressed exclamations. But his delight knew no bounds, when, at the beginning of the offertory, Tartini's violin was heard. Discreetly accompanied by a few light chords from the other stringed instruments, the song rose, pure, delicate, sonorous. It began with a very simple phrase, a kind of farewell, mingled with regrets. Tartini was then far advanced in years, and each time he played at the festival of the Saint, he thought it would be the last. Every year he gave his plaintive melody a more touching character. If his playing had lessened in strength with years, it had lost none of its grace, or purity. After finishing the melody, he took it up again, embellishing it. Each successive variation was more delicate than the preceding one. They were like falling pearls, and enveloped the listener in a wave of harmony. The audience were transported with admiration. Zani listened with the utmost attention, his eyes half-closed, his lips parted, in a smile of happiness. The slabs of the church might have given way under his feet; he would not have noticed it. The divine charm in which he was steeped could be read in his face.

When the sounds of the violin died away, the organs burst forth, and continued the interrupted mass. No one applauded, but the quivering of the



crowd was equal to long bravos. Zani seemed to be awakening from a dream, he opened his eyes immoderately, asking himself where he was.

"Signor Cavaliere," said a voice in his ear, "the music appears to make you forget your gallantry." A well-gloved hand pointed over his shoulder to a large black fan, which had fallen to the ground in front of him.

He hastened to pick it up, and as he raised himself, he turned round to offer it to the person who had spoken to him.

It was a tall young woman, blond, plump, and fresh, like the nymphs of Paul Veronese. Her negligently powdered hair was gathered on the top of her head. Two spots of rouge conspicuously put on under her eyes, did not succeed in diminishing the brightness of her complexion. Her mouth was smiling, her eyes were kindly. In spite of the season, she wore a heavy gown of black satin, puffed into large paniers, with wide sleeves lined with very stiff silver cloth. Bows of flame-coloured taffeta adorned her bodice, which, in spite of the sanctity of the spot, was cut rather low.

A servant in a white veil, wearing a dress of coloured linen, served as her escort; this girl looked like a stage *soubrette*, and the exaggerated bow which the stranger made Zani, prevented his having any difficulty in recognizing to what class she belonged. From that moment his attention was divided between the music, and his beautiful neighbour.

Each time she caught one of his looks, she smiled pleasantly at him. Towards the end of the mass her maid approached her, and murmured a few words in her ear, pointing to a tall and handsome young man, standing behind a pillar, who was watching her jealously.

"What do I care whether Don Marzio sees me or not!" answered the provoked actress in a tone loud enough for Zani to hear. "After all, I do not belong to him, and am at liberty to do as I please."

The ceremony ended with a *Te Deum* in which were lavished all the musical riches of the chapel of the Santo. The four organs, the orchestra, the choirs, the sopranos, seemed to be vying with each other in agility and rapidity, mingling in a final fugue, which resembled a steeple-chase in which each one was trying to reach the winning post first. The

virtuosi were charmed. When the amen at length sounded, Zani, who had remained insensible to this wealth of sounds, occupying himself chiefly with the actress, preceded her as she went out of the church, in order to offer her holy water. But he had been anticipated; the dark young man whom he had seen watching the beautiful stranger during mass, was there, with bent brows and angry look, and when Zani stretched out his hand to her, he also offered his. The actress smilingly accepted the holy water offered her by Zani, then, as if she had only at that moment become aware of the jealous one's presence: "Oh, are you there, Don Marzio?" she said in a tone which betrayed some dissatisfaction, and leaning on his arm, she moved away slowly, and as if with regret, making a gesture of farewell to Zani.

Zani noticed that nearly all the young men bowed to her as she passed. He spoke to a poor man to whom she had just given alms:

"You know that beautiful lady?" he asked him.

"Who does not know the queen of *prime donne*, the Signora Dejanira, who has come to stay at Padua during the fair!"

He then remembered that they had told him, when he was leaving Venice, that one of the greatest pleasures which awaited him at Padua would be to hear the *Attilio Regolo* sung by the famous soprano Mingotti, and a buffoonery of Paesiello's with Dejanira in the part of the maid-servant, a part in which this brilliant creature had turned the heads of all Germany and Italy.

Padua presented a scene of animation to which Zani was unaccustomed. The narrow streets with arcades, crossed by gardens surrounded by high walls, were filled with a bustling crowd, pouring out of the church, and diminishing by degrees as it spread throughout the neighbouring streets. He proceeded to the hotel de l'Aquila Nero, where, after having lunched with a numerous company, he carefully studied his violin, while waiting for the hour to come, at which he might duly call on Tartini, with whom he wished to ingratiate himself, before the trial of the ensuing day.

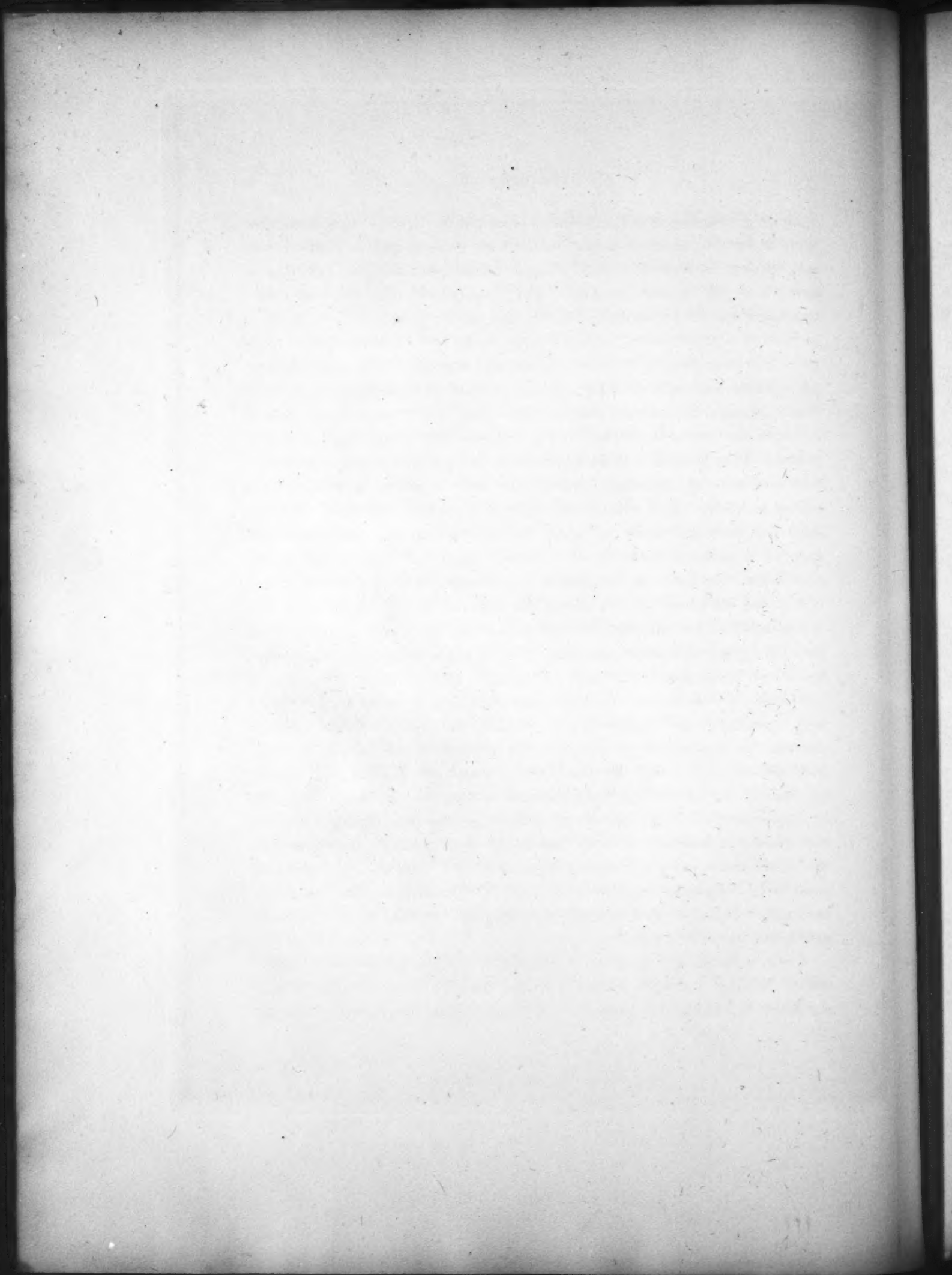
At the end of an hour, he was seized with impatience, and decided to take a walk.













In a garden opposite the hotel were established public entertainments; there were also quack-doctors, exhibitors of animals and curiosities, who had erected their booths beneath tall trees, and decorated them with banners of all colours, on which were painted the Lion of Venice and rough pictures of St. Anthony.

Zani was particularly amused by the tricks of a monkey showman, a great Bohemian fellow, almost as black as a negro. He was accompanied by a young woman with soft, sad eyes, dressed as a savage and crowned with a diadem of peacock plumes, which were half-broken. She danced amongst the monkeys, holding out a rod over which they turned somersaults. They jumped and frolicked about her, executing a strange ballet, with grimaces of enjoyment, giving little cries of pleasure, sharp as the piping of birds. Zani enjoyed the sight like a child, and when the man held out the tambourine on which he had accompanied the dance, he dropped a piece of silver in it. The delighted Bohemian signed to his companion, and said in bad Italian: "Respah, come, you must thank this young Cavaliere by telling him his fortune."

In order to be obliging, Zani held out his hand with an incredulous air. The gipsy examined it carefully, then, in a low, serious tone: "Signor, beware of the stones in the road," she said to him.

"This is a sorceress who will not compromise herself," thought Zani with a smile; "she speaks like the oracle of Delphi, and her prophecies can be applied to every one. Whose path in life is not bristling with difficulties?" And as this thought reminded him of the aim of his journey, he turned with light step towards Tartini's house.

The streets of Padua are paved with large, irregular stones, mingled with blocks of porphyry. Grass, mosses, a whole parasitic flora grows in the interstices; carriages roll over them only with difficulty, and the foot passengers frequently stumble over them. "Beware of the stones in the road," repeated Zani smilingly to himself. "The infidel certainly meant the streets of Padua."

Tartini's house was situated at the end of a large garden. A square harbour forming a deeply shaded arch led from the entrance gate to the vestibule. Between the pillars stood antique vases, fragments of statues

and busts picked up by labourers in the neighbouring fields. Through the arcades could be distinguished the symmetrically arranged flower-beds, in which red and yellow predominated. On each side of the avenues rose yews, and other trees, cut in the form of animals. The house was overhung with verdure, and the roof, shaped like a terrace, was ornamented with amphoras of red clay.

Zani asked to be conducted to the maestro.

"He is at table," answered the old servant who had opened the door to him, "but if you will wait, he will soon be able to see you."

She led him into a large gallery.

The walls were covered with grey wainscoting. They were ornamented according to the taste of those days, with all the exaggeration in which southern races indulge when imitating any particular fashion. On the frescoed ceiling, in the style of Tiepolo, could be seen Apollo, enchanting monsters with the music of his violin. Numerous violins and books of music, were arranged in low cabinets of gilded wood. Blue velvet stools were scattered about the room. A raised platform, a foot high, held a harpsichord surrounded by a number of music-stands. The walls were decorated with Murano glass, a gift of Doge Francesco Loredano, at whose coronation Tartini had gone over to execute one of his "Sonatas di Chiesa" in the basilica of San Marco. There was but one picture to be seen. On a large panel was represented the convent of Assisi, where Tartini had taken refuge when a certain marriage, which gave rise to scandal, caused him, in his extreme youth, to leave Padua, where he was studying law at the University. He had been subjected to a long exile by the will of his parents as well as the authority of the magistrates, and had sought refuge in this holy asylum, where he knew that no Venetian law could reach him. In order to utilise the leisure of his involuntary confinement, he devoted himself with ardour to the study of the violin, under the direction of a monk, an unknown master, whom penitence had driven to bury his talent in solitude.

When Tartini was at length able to leave the convent, he had reached the marvellous degree of perfection in execution, which was destined to



win the admiration of all the artists of his time. Zani remembered all the details of this popular story, as he stood contemplating the view of the Convent of Assisi, when the sound of the door opening with some noise, made him turn round.

The master entered, surrounded by a number of disciples, whom he had invited to dinner in honour of the Santo, and who formed a kind of court around him. In spite of his great age (he was then seventy-six years old), Tartini held his head high, and wore proudly the coat of silver cloth, bedizened with orders, which he had not taken off since the ceremony that morning. Amongst his pupils was a young woman, who was afterwards applauded at the sacred concerts of the Court of France under the name of Madame de Sirmen. She was the object of the attentions of her comrades, in one of whom Zani had no pleasure in recognizing the jealous young man who had taken Dejanira home when she left the church. The latter in turn eyed him with a defiant look.

Tartini gave a kindly reception to Zani Trivelli, who presented him a letter from a Venetian senator, whose *protégé* he was.

"So," he said, after he had taken off the large gold spectacles which had facilitated his reading : "you have come to measure yourself against my children at the competition which takes place to-morrow? My friends," he added turning towards his pupils, "let me introduce to you a rival." Then returning to Zani : "After a while, my boy, you must give us a sample of your talent."

The young men who were to take part in the next day's competition, did their best to answer with a courteous murmur, but this attempt was rather constrained than sincere. It was easy to discern amongst them a certain amount of vexation, which Dejanira's lover did not even conceal. "Why," said he, "must strangers come here to dispute with us a place which ought by rights to belong to us Paduans, brought up at Padua?"

"Be silent, Marzio Volpi," interrupted Tartini, giving him a severe look. "The place is intended for talent, and talent belongs to no land. But here comes the Dejanira, to delight our old ears, and charm our eyes.



She knows that old age prevents me from going to the theatre to applaud her, and is good enough to come here and sing that air of which you are all so passionately fond. I am told, Marzio Volpi, that you play the violin accompaniment admirably, and therefore beg you to undertake it."

The Dejanira, smiling, received the compliments of all and in spite of Volpi's presence, made a friendly sign to Zani Trivelli, who was standing somewhat aloof.

A servant brought sherbets and lemonade, then, after a few minutes, one of the young men took his seat at the harpsichord. Marzio stationed himself near a stand, and the Dejanira placed herself near the front of the platform, as if she were on the stage. The air which Tartini had requested her to sing, was one of Astorga's, which, through some artistic caprice, she added to the rôle of Serpina in *La Serva*, by Pergolese. The words have no connection whatever with the piece. It is a message entrusted to a zephyr by some one in love. "*Auretta vezzosa favella pietosa al vago mio sol.*" This air had been strangely altered, to suit the Dejanira, and since the day when she became interested in Marzio Volpi, she had had a score for the violin added to it, which, she said, represented the zephyr's answers. In spite of everything, they had not succeeded in spoiling the charming melody, and each time she sang this interlude, the Dejanira was frantically recalled, and took care to make her lover participate in her triumph. Admirably gifted by nature, the Dejanira made up by intelligence for what was wanting in the way of work.

Volpi's playing was very accurate and pure, perhaps more correct than expressive. He exaggerated his master's qualities, so as almost to turn them into faults, for he might be said to have a certain dryness of execution. Zani understood at once that this handsome young man would not be a serious rival for him, before competent judges.

The Dejanira ended with a perfect firework display of notes, which were received with prolonged applause from the little crowd of enthusiasts.

"It is your turn now," said the master to Zani: "you are not afraid? No? So much the better. Choose an instrument from amongst these, your choice cannot fail to be good," he said, pointing to a glass-

case full of violins. "They are all Amatis, Guarneris, or Stradivaris."

Zani took up the first violin which came to his hand, and although somewhat agitated, yet certain of his knowledge and worth, he began without any false modesty. As a delicate attention, he had chosen the first part of the sonata in G. which was considered Tartini's most difficult work, and which he knew to be one of the maestro's favourites.

He boldly attacked the striking phrase with which it opens, and which a brilliant passage leads to a second subject, graceful and slightly melancholy, which he rendered with a delicacy approved of by a significant nod from the old artist; then the opening phrase recurred, developing with such fulness, such majesty, that organ notes seemed to be issuing from the fragile instrument.

The power of real talent is so great, and the Italians are so susceptible to any of its impressions, that in spite of their very natural prepossession against Zani, Tartini's pupils, aroused by the emotion produced by such firm and masterly playing, applauded him to the utmost. Old Tartini embraced him, saying: "Blessed be the mother who bore you." Then looking sadly at Volpi, whom he considered the cleverest of his pupils, "Poor Marzio," he said, "I fear you have found your master."

Marzio Volpi had grown livid; he had no control whatever over himself, and did not know how to conceal his bad feelings. With clenched hands and trembling lips, he signed to his mistress that he could stand it no longer, and left the room, no doubt hoping that she would follow him. But, whether she was weary of always having an envious and jealous man to appease, or had some entirely different reason, she remained, and went up to Zani, with a little more timidity than she had shown that morning.

"Play us something else, my friend," said Tartini.

Then by a prodigious effort of memory, Zani, whom this triumph before such an audience somewhat excited, began simply, with precision and feeling, the subject of the "Sonata di Chiesa" which the master had that very morning executed for the first time at the Santo. Then, the melody once finished, he gave way to a frenzy of improvisation. The notes fell from his bow like carelessly strewn flowers, yet, amidst



the wildest arabesques, the ear could always follow the leading idea.

"Encore! Encore!" cried the young men when he seemed to wish to stop; and he began again, with renewed ardour. When he had finished there was a thunder of applause and exclamations.

Tartini, too much moved to speak, shed tears. When Zani came and bent his young head before him, he pressed it to his breast. In an unguarded burst of admiration, the delighted Dejanira seized the hand which had just produced such marvellous sounds, and raised it to her lips. Zani grew red and pale by turns, a strange fire coursed through his veins. A smothered exclamation was heard coming from the garden; it was Marzio Volpi, who, having approached one of the windows, had caught this movement. He immediately fled with a violent gesture.

Tartini made a sign to signify that he was fatigued, and asked to be left alone. They dispersed slowly. Zani was received with open arms by the young enthusiasts whom he did not know an hour before, and who surrounded him as if he were a friend. The Dejanira was naturally by his side, and hung proudly on his arm.

On leaving the maestro's house they followed the crowd and directed their steps towards the open place where the fair was being held. This encampment, with its picturesque booths, its numerous tents lined with striped stuff, set up beneath the trees of the Trato della Valle, presented the aspect of one of those bazaars mentioned in the *Arabian Nights*.

The Oriental element was indeed largely represented. One saw turbaned Turks clad in pale green or rose-leaf coloured pelisses squatting on piles of carpets, striped gauzes, or scarlet cloth; slender bottles of gilded crystal containing rose-water were spread out before them, as well as valuable arms and trappings incrustated with gold and turquoises. Farther on Armenians, Greeks, Persians, who might be recognized by their black bonnets and robes of striped silk, dealt in tobacco, coffee, perfumes, Chio mastics and gums from Arabia. One might also see Poles, with furs, lynx-skins, sables and ermines in bales. The Swiss had brought embroidered muslins. The French had elegantly arranged wigs, dressed and powdered, in all styles, dolls attired in the latest fashion,



patch-boxes, and masks of Lyons taffeta. The Venetians and the Genoese rivalled each other in a magnificent display of flowered stuffs, velvets, gold and silver moires. The Dejanira stopped beneath a shed where some Spaniards were selling swords and long perfumed gloves. The young people amused themselves by comparing the flexible blades, while she tried on the gloves. They talked with the merchants for a long time, then they left them without having bought anything, after exchanging many bows and smiles.

"By the bye, gentlemen," said Dejanira, "I do not sing this evening, they give the *Attilio Regolo*; I shall stay at home and rest. But after the Opera, you must bring Marzio and we will sup together."

The company separated, and Zani remained alone with the actress.

"We must part," she said, "my house is not very far off, yonder, where you see those large trees, near the Botanical Garden. If Volpi finds me alone with you, God only knows what a scene he will make when we go back. I cannot stand it any longer. His jealousy overpowers me!"

"Why do you endure it?"

"What am I to do? When I arrived here I had spent two years at the Court of Vienna, and he was the first one who told me in my own language that he loved me; besides, I thought him handsome and he pleased me. Women are fond of undertaking difficult tasks, and the idea of taming a wild beast was rather pleasant to me. Marzio is really a wild beast! But I think I have only succeeded in making him a little more unhappy. His suspicions and torments are unceasing, I do not know what to do now."

"Leave him."

"No, but shall I own it to you, sometimes I am a little afraid of him."

"Why?"

"If you knew him!"

"But—you would find people to defend you."

"Do you then handle the sword as well as the bow?"

"The future will tell you that."

"He is a regular bravo. I repeat it, I am afraid. Look, here he comes in this direction. I pray you, go!"

And as Zani appeared as if he were going to stay, lifting his head :

"Go, I implore you."

"Do you imagine that I fear him?"

"Certainly not, but have pity and leave me. We shall see one another again. I promise you that."

At these words he went slowly away, after making her a deep bow.

At the end of a few minutes, Zani quickened his step, going in the direction of the open country. He felt the need of being alone. So many emotions had assailed him in so short a time!

It is a great enjoyment to a Venetian accustomed to walking on marble, to tread the grass of the fields underfoot. At this time of the year the country in the environs of Padua is still fresh. On the edge of the ditches one can gather large blue or pale golden yellow irises. The irregular hills on the horizon with their silver lilac tints, resemble the backgrounds of the landscapes which one often sees in Titian's pictures. That day the country was deserted, not a peasant was to be met with on the road, every one had gone to the town for the opening of the fair. This stillness did Zani a great deal of good. But by degrees, as the agitation of his nerves ceased, his heart and brain were filled with a feeling of joy, of strange and ineffable happiness. His preoccupation had entirely disappeared, he saw before him nothing besides Dejanira's smiling face. "Is it possible," thought Zani, "that one can love a woman whom one has hardly seen!"

Night was falling, he retraced his steps, and stopped at the entrance to the town, at an *osteria* on the bank of the canal, where supper was served in an arbour poorly lighted by copper lamps of antique form.

Round the heavy tables sat young married couples, betrothed lovers, sweethearts, all young, nearly all handsome, having in their faces the look of smiling gravity which happiness brings, gazing at each other a great deal, and eating very little. This sight completed Zani's intoxication. He no longer gave a thought to music. Everything around him was extolling love.













An old man passing by on the road, carrying a guitar, seeing so much youth gathered together, struck a few chords on his instrument and declaimed in melodic style these two verses of Tasso :

Perduto é tutto il tempo  
Che in amor non si spende.

It was nearly ten o'clock when Zani decided to re-enter the town. The moon illuminated the place, the air was fragrant with the perfume of the first flowers of summer, fire-flies hovered along the roads. It was like night in fairy-land. It seemed to him that all the houses, all the gardens emitted harmonious sounds.

Having reached one of the suburbs he entered an avenue lined with trees, and running alongside the walls of a large park. A bunch of jasmine falling at his feet made him lift his head mechanically. Great was his astonishment when he recognized the place where the Dejanira had that day told him she lived. He stopped, pensive. In a few moments a voice which he could not fail to recognize rose from under the tall trees and diffused itself in crystalline notes : "*Aurora vezzosa*," it sang, "*favella pietosa al vago mio sol*." The song approached and retreated like that of an attractive siren. Zani felt his heart beat.

The part of the wall near which he found himself had recently crumbled and made a breach at the foot of, which were piled up large stones, formed like those used for paving, with which it was to be repaired.

Without troubling as to whether he was observed or not, Zani made use of them as a step and quickly climbed the wall. While making this ascent he remembered the advice given him by the fortune-teller, to beware of the stones in the road.

"These stones sometimes have good qualities," thought he.

The ground of the garden was much more elevated than that of the road, and formed a terrace on the other side of the wall; he reached it easily. A fresh burst of laughter greeted his arrival : "You enter by the breach like a conqueror! Signor Cavaliere, you are welcome." And the Dejanira, who had until that moment remained hidden behind a tree, appeared before him, without powder, without rouge, in all the splendour of her twentieth year.

Having recognized him at a distance, without reflecting, with the caprice of a spoiled child, she had begun to sing in order to call him to her. Yet she was not ignorant of the danger which they both ran in case her infidelity was discovered by Marzio Volpi. But having decided to break with him, she knew, besides, that the jealous man did not return from the theatre until late in the evening.

Zani was silent, somewhat surprised at the suddenness of this apparition. The Dejanira put her arm in his. She had taken off her fine dress of the morning, and wore a *déshabillé* of pale pink silk, whose long folds trailed on the grass. They walked on silently for several minutes, and finally seated themselves on a bench placed at one end of the terrace. The moon shone brilliantly, and they could see one another as if in broad daylight. Near them splashed a fountain, the water rising and falling in a marble basin with a rythmical sound.

"How beautiful you are! And how sweet the night is!" sighed Zani at length. Then he became silent again, contemplating her with rapture.

"Speak," she murmured in a graver tone than usual, "I love to hear you speak, you revive the hope of life in me."

"Are you unhappy?"

"No," she answered with a smile, and the moon threw a silver gleam over her white teeth, "at this moment I am very happy."

She abandoned one of her hands to him, then the other, then both together. Ordinarily she had at her service a thousand resources of coquetry with which to stop or encourage her lovers, as it were refining their pleasure. To-day she did not recognize her own self, she was without strength, without will, she smiled mechanically, from force of habit. Sobs seemed to be rising in her throat. Was it the beauty of the spot, of the hour, of the season, the presence of this young man whose embrace made her shiver? But it seemed to her that she was perfectly happy. She had never spent even a moment of such happiness.

From a neighbouring garden was wafted the sound of a serenade of violins and hautboys whose strains, dulled by the foliage of the great trees, formed a harmonious accompaniment to their disconnected talk. Dejanira, whose conversation was generally no more than a long peal of

laughter, found pleasure in recounting the few recollections of her life. At the moment when she began to love seriously, she thought it her duty to recall the small amount of seriousness contained in a past which had been as frivolous as that of a butterfly could be.

Zani stammered mad, incoherent words, it was not only the exuberance of youthful passion, but all his inmost poetic feelings were excited to the highest degree.

The balminess of the night, those vague harmonies which hovered around, intoxicated him as if he had absorbed a magic philter.

"How beautiful you are, my Dejanira!— The pearls in your necklace are darkened by the whiteness of your neck."

And Dejanira, quickly raising her hands to her throat, tore off her necklace. It was a gift the remembrance of which was odious to her at that moment.

"You, no one but you! To-morrow no obstacle will separate us, and we shall be happy."

"Happy!" repeated Zani like an echo. "How tender your smile is! Speak again, my beloved!"

"Hush; I heard some one walking in the road."

And she closed his mouth with her white hand.

"Child," he answered, disengaging himself, "it is the night wind passing through the trees." And he clasped her to him again.

At the end of a few minutes she started back, frightened.

"This time I am sure of it, I distinctly heard some one speaking." They remained silent for an instant.

"You are dreaming, my beloved, it is the sound of the water falling on the marble of the basin."

And she felt Zani's burning lips pressed to her mouth, half-opened like a flower. She leaned half-fainting with joy against her lover's breast, her eyes fixed on his.

The numerous clocks of Padua striking twelve slowly, brought them back to reality.

"Now you must go," she said. "My friends will be coming, and we must avoid giving Volpi the pain of finding us together. He will



suffer quite enough when I tell him that I am going to leave him."

Slowly, with their arms around one another, they wended their way to the opening through which he had entered the park.

The moment Zani sprang into the road, he found himself surrounded by a troop of men whose faces were carefully concealed.

In the twinkling of an eye he was disarmed and bound.

"Do what I have ordered," said a voice which was neither loud nor low, and which was not unknown to him. They forced him to kneel, and seizing his right arm without his being able to make the slightest resistance, they stretched out his hand on one of the large stones which covered the roadway. Then the man who had spoken, seizing one of the heaviest paving stones, dashed it down with all his strength on the unfortunate violinist's hand. Zani distinctly heard the cracking of his breaking bones, he felt his crushed fingers detach themselves from his hand, and the pain which he endured was so great that he fell back fainting, while recognizing in a diabolical chuckle the voice of Marzio Volpi, who went away with his accomplices.

ALAIN DE MERIONEC.





## FLOWERS IN PARIS

### "SWEET VIOLETS"

The scene is a path in the Bellevue woods. Day is dying as we make our way home, carrying one of those late autumn nosegays, gay with the crimson of the changing leaves rather than with the bright hues of blossoms, which, in our country houses, deck the flower vases as if for a farewell feast, while the equinoctial gales beat against the shutters. With the russet heath and wild grasses plucked by the way side, you have mingled a few roses—the gift of an old friend we have called on before returning to the city. Perched on ladder, the garden-scissors in his trembling hand, he was fain to cut the last "Malmaison" on his trellis; and as you go down the forest path you leave behind you a wake of fragrance, the odour of these late-blown flowers, exhaling the very soul of passing sweetness.

You say : "Who was it that wrote a line which rings in my memory, 'Sweetest of roses is an autumn rose?'"

And I reply that it was no consumptive poet of the romantic galaxy—not Gautier the pagan, nor Lamartine the musical, nor Hugo, who loved flowers and trees with a brother's love—who embalmed the sadness of his heart in those words as an essence may be confined in a ring; that long ago, in the days when men went to war for religion—the days of massacres, of sword-thrusts, of blazing stakes—an iron-bound Huguenot, Agrippa d'Aubigné, wrote it on his tablets during a military expedition, between two executions of papists. It touches you deeply just at that moment to think that this soldier of a past time had once felt his heart melt under his breast-plate, as yours has done, at the scent of an autumn flower.

The path we are following widens out to a clearing. A wicker basket is standing on the grass by the ditch, packed full of heath and perennial violets tied into market-bunches; a piece of bread lies cast away close by. The birds are shyly hopping round it; at our approach they fly off in a hurry.

We look about us to right and left through the thinned brush-wood and call out : "Here—who sells these flowers?"

Far, far away, from among the bushes a dark figure rises up against the screen of dark leaves. It is a girl of about twelve. She wears a red hood like Little Red Riding-hood herself. She shades her eyes with her hand to see better. She does not seem quite easy. She may be thinking : "What if those people were to carry off my basket of flowers!"

To reassure her I cry : "Little one, will you sell us your violets?"

I expect to see her run joyfully to meet us, but on the contrary, she comes slowly, still distrustful. She is but a small person, this woodland flower-girl, but she has certainly had some experience of life. She has ceased to believe in unexpected good fortune. She waits till she is sure before she will be glad.

There she is facing us on the bank. She studies us from head to foot. She looks at the flowers we have in our hands, and then down



at the basket—to make sure perhaps that her dozen big bunches are all safe; then without a smile, she asks :

“Violets? How many bunches do you want?”

“All the basketful, unless they are sold.”

“And the heath too?”

“Very well; the heath too.”

“That is twenty-two sous in all.”

Then to forestall any bargaining, she hastens to add :

“Violets are very scarce just now. You need not believe me unless you like, but I have been all day picking them.”

She sits down on the grass, and very deftly, with her practised fingers, she twists up the long stems of the violets she has in her apron; then she puts a paper round them and a few ivy leaves.

We go on our way under the trees; the little maid trots in front. She is quite tame now and chatters to us.

“If we had not met you, what would you have done with your flowers?”

“I should have taken them to Paris.”

“Do you often go there?”

“Every other day.”

“Are your parents gardeners?”

“No; they are charcoal-burners in the forest. We are just now living in a hut near the stacks, out by the ponds at Chaville. Mother helps father with the fire. This year past grandmother does not come to help me pick flowers; she has a pain in her back and cannot stoop. But in summer, when the cowslips are out, I have a load of baskets. I could not carry them all alone, so then Granny comes with me.”

“And you walk into Paris?”

“To be sure; and there are others who come from much further—from Montmorency and from the woods by Sénart—particularly when the jonquils are out. They have plenty of them down there. They have to be off early, by three in the morning; it is quite dark. On the way back sometimes a market-gardener is good-natured and gives one a lift in his cart, but it is of no use to look for that going; every one has his own load to carry.”

"And where do you sell your flowers? Outside the market place?"

"Oh! no, there are too many of the same trade there. It is all very well for those who have a little money and who buy by auction. I go and sit down near the bridges where I know the police, and they say nothing to me. I give them a flower now and then for their sweethearts, and they do not drive me away."

"Then are you forbidden to sell violets in the streets?"

"Yes, without leave from the Prefecture."

"And how much do you make in the season?"

The child looks at me with an air of importance and says, as she tosses her little red hood :

"Some Sundays I have made as much as three francs."

"Selling violets?"

"Selling lilies of the valley."

"Are there any lilies of the valley in the Bellevue woods?"

Silence. The little maid bites her lips as if vexed at having told too much. She looks doubtful of us again, and answers vaguely :

"There are some—a long way off. And you must know where to look for them."

And for the rest of the way she walks on, lost in thought, without another word, only sorry she has said so much, and suddenly shrunk back into her rustic shell.

If you ever come across my little flower-girl on the bridge, carrying her shallow basket and hailing the passers-by with her little chant : "God save you ladies and gentlemen—sweet violets, two sous a bunch!" and if you wish her to go home to her charcoal-burners' hut with a light heart, do not tell her, even in jest, that you have found out "where to look" for lilies of the valley in the woods of Chaville.

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#### THE FLOWER-MARKET

Silence reigns in the woods. The equinoctial squalls have swept away the last remaining leaves. A shroud of snow lies over the country. It has put out the charcoal-burners' fire. It has so completely effaced the paths under its thick, fine fleece that the little flower-girl's sabots













could never retrace the way which is now level with the fields. But Paris insists on perpetual spring; it requires flowers and scents for its feasts, its weddings, its graves. It will have the brightness of flowers on the chimney-shelf above the blazing fire. It will have a bunch of Parma violets pinned to a muff, or stuck into a button-hole, nestling cosily in fur. So every day, in the winter as in summer, little barrow-loads of violets are sent forth from the flower-markets. The trail of damp flowers hangs about the corners of the dismal streets, coming upon us like a surprise from the broad, shallow baskets which are fresh and gay, and thrills us like a song that brings relief to sorrow.

The flower-seller has taken shelter with her truck in the draught of a gate-way. There she sits, resigned, her feet on a charcoal brasier, her hands under her apron, watching the passers-by huddled in their wraps, while her flowers curl and shrivel in the cold. She takes patience; waiting for half an hour's sunshine to sally out in the pale wintry beams, trundling her load of colour, scent, and brightness, and piping the bird-like cry which tempts home-keepers to half-open a window :

"Russian violets! Fine Russian violets!"

Has it never struck you, as you passed one of these fragrant trucks on your way to your office or your studio, how much you would like to turn up your sleeves and push one of these flower-trucks from morning till night, your load growing lighter every hour? Have you never said to yourself : "How must I set to work to become a flower-seller?"

Well, I knew no more than you, till one fine winter morning I made my way to the central market, at an hour when balls are at their maddest, and languishing groups of waltzing figures are seen floating past the windows of brightly lighted rooms like shades on the curtains.

The market for cut flowers is held in the central transept of the right hand dome going from the Church of Saint-Eustache. In winter it goes on from four in the morning till the nine o'clock bell rings; in summer only till the eight o'clock bell; but the trucks begin coming in as early as eleven o'clock at night. No one has any fixed standing-ground. They take their places as they arrive. And every day there are fights between the market-gardeners' men who are furious at being obliged to remain with

their baskets at the end of the walk. These skirmishes often end tragically; one day last year a man was killed.

The owners do not appear till four o'clock strikes. Then peace is restored. The whole length of the immense avenue is hedged with baskets on each side of the foot-way. On the right as you go in is "Nice"—the market for foreign flowers delivered on the spot by the Paris and Mediterranean Railway Company; on the left is "Paris,"—hothouse flowers brought carefully packed in carts from the gardens of Ménilmontant, Montreuil, Vaugirard, Vanves and Charonne. Business is brisk on both sides, but it is on the "Paris" side, where white lilac, roses, camelias, gardenias and guelder-roses lie, that great fortunes are made.

The sellers look askance at each other from the opposite sides of the avenue: "Paris" at "Nice," the sun at the hothouse. The North shrugs its shoulders at the tumultuous South, while the Southerners get the fidgets as they watch the calm demeanour of the North country folk, half-asleep as they sit waiting for a customer, their hands in their aprons and their feet on brasier stools. The roadway—as wide as a river, as wide as the Loire—flows between the irreconcilable camps of the gardeners and the brokers. The Southern faction are the brokers. The Mediterranean railway brings in hundreds of bunches with such addresses as these:

"Monsieur le No. 4; baskets 6, 8, 10, 12."

In this way each one easily claims his property. The day's supply is sold off; the seller gets five per cent for his trouble. There is no check on them: it would be impossible to exercise it. All the dealings are taken on trust, and very honestly transacted, as I am informed by M. Legard, "Syndic of flowers."

Syndic of flowers! And his life is spent in patching up truces between the "barrows" and the brokers. For you need hardly be told in so many words that the barrow-women have nothing to do with hothouses. White lilac is too dear and too delicate for them. By the time they have paid five francs for a week's hire of the truck which carries all their fortune, and four sous toll daily for the right of pushing it about the streets, many a one has not more than a franc left. Then she comes, looking as sweet as she knows how, to some broker who knows her.

She asks for credit. She is not too particular as to the quality of goods; she picks out the best of yesterday's flowers which come up all wet from the cellars. With a spray of mimosa stuck in among the violets to tempt the eye and serve as sign, she goes her way.

But when she has turned a fair sum the day before and can jingle a few five franc pieces in her pocket, she does not dream of suing to the brokers. She waits for the sale by auction.

Just when the gas lamps in the transept are beginning to look haggard, when a fresher air rustles over the bunches of anemones and pale pink hyacinths, which under this light have a tempting suggestiveness as of fair shivering flesh, a voice is suddenly heard :

"Now then, who wants violets?"

Three salesmen stand behind a table; a fourth, seated at a little desk, pen in hand, waits till business shall begin. But no one is in any hurry. Fine and bad weather rule the market; and in these snowy mornings, when the roads are like grease, the flowers are not sold, they are given away. And the hoarse voice goes on calling :

"Make haste! Hurry up for violets! Do not delay. You would not leave them on my hands this morning?"

The cry is heard all over the market; old women come at the call, with handkerchiefs tied over their heads. They stand to see the baskets opened; inside each lid is a ticket stating the quantity and the quality of the contents, and the price asked. The crier shouts it all out:

"Russian violets! Hurry up for these fine Russian violets! Sixty-seven market-bunches! Twelve francs! Look sharp now, and do not rummage!"

You must understand that he does not want them to handle the goods too much under pretence of examining the size and variety.

"Twelve francs! Will any one bid eleven francs? Nine? Eight? Gone at eight francs!"

"Eight francs for all that lot?" exclaims a good woman who has come too late. She speaks in a tone of envy. "Gros-René is not here; that is plain."

And who is Gros-René? Gros-René is a legendary hero with the wandering flower-seller.



Gros-René is a jolly worthy, whom you will find any sunny day on the Place de la Trinité. In ten years he earned a capital of more than two hundred thousand francs by his truck. He could retire into the country, become a town-councillor, breed rabbits. No, his eye is still keen, his tread firm, he has no idea of leaving the market avenue where he is addressed as *Monsieur Gros-René*, and nothing less.

When he comes to attend the auction, the price current of "Parmas" and "Russians" goes up a sou at once. The barrow-women make way to let him pass to the front. He may plunge both fists into the baskets without even being warned by the crier :

"Come, do not rummage."

He is Gros-René, and his popularity is amazing. Next time you cross the Place de la Trinité, look about till you find him, and buy a bunch of his violets; you will see if that vagabond flower-seller has not all the manner of a man raised before his death to the dignity of a myth.

Seven o'clock. The auctioneer is hoarse, silent. The gossips return to the trucks, that stand waiting by the gutter with their shafts in the air. They display their goods to the best advantage. Then they spit in their palms.

"Off!" And the bright little vehicles scatter in every direction. Most of them carry as many as two thousand bunches of violets. If the sun should come out they will return empty, and then the hundred francs the good woman has invested may bring her twenty francs profit.

The Syndic of Flowers gives me all this information, and is greatly distressed that I should have visited his dominion on such a gloomy day.

"Come again," says he, "a few months hence, when cowslips and blue-bells fill our barrows."

I will certainly go again, Monsieur le Syndic des Fleurs, some bright night in May. But however abundant your crop may be then, I am sure I cannot think it lovelier than the twopenny-worth of Spring I saw unpacked amid the snow.

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THE FLOWER-SHOP

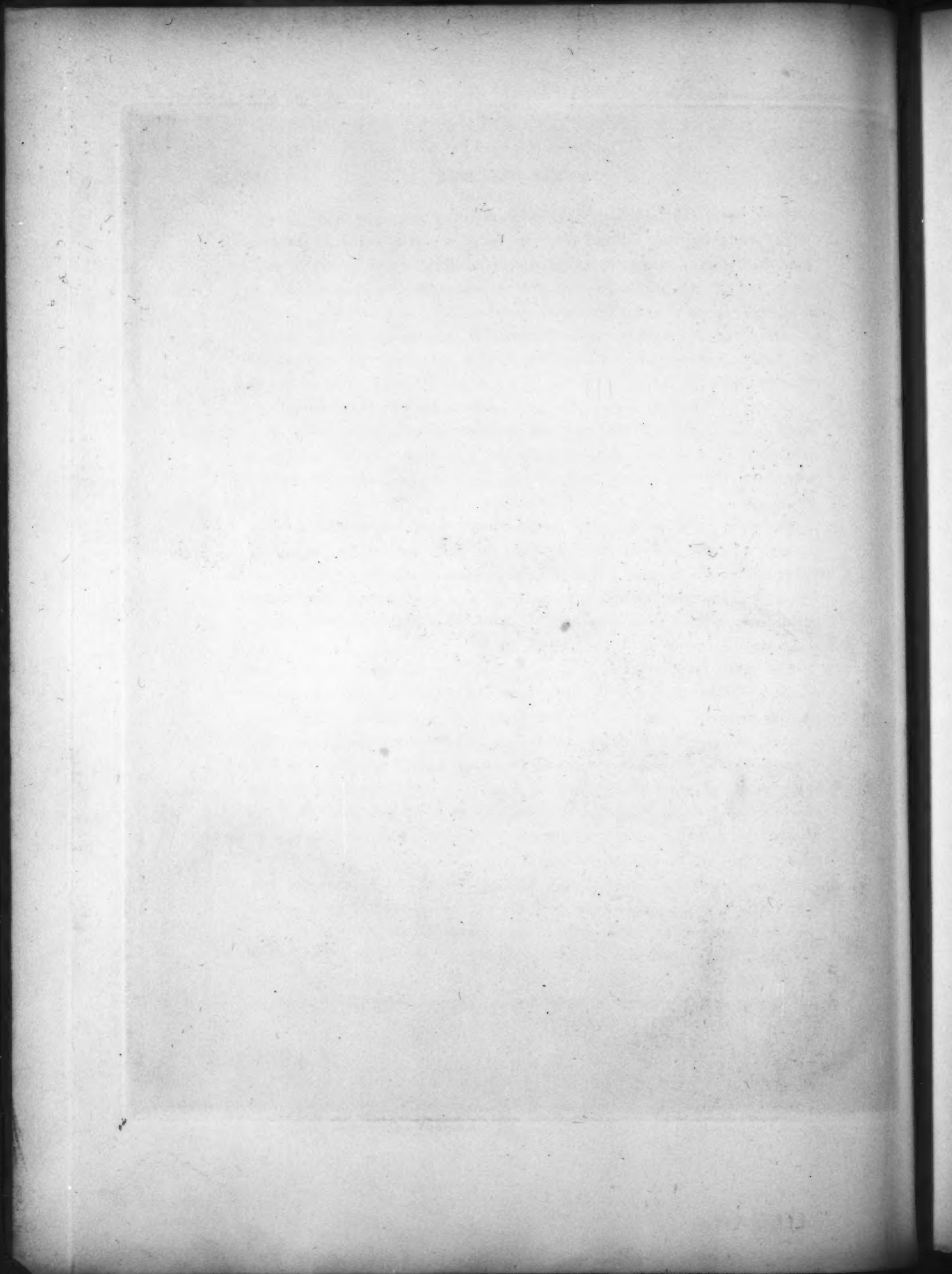
You who have never seen her but in her fine afternoon dress—silk,











ribbons, diamonds and lace—the flower-seller, whose eyes and smile are more bewitching than all the roses in her shop, you would never guess that this elegant being begins her day's work at an hour of the night when the flowers themselves are closed, sleeping with folded petals to keep out the dew which discolours them.

The flower-seller rather prides herself on concealing her life "behind the scenes," and it was by mere chance that I detected the secret of her transformation.

It was a fine night last winter, during the Carnival; a night when the moon hung a globe in the sky, and the heels of little boots left a sharp print in the white frost that powdered the pavement. I was making my way down the Rue Royale, with my hands in my pockets as far as they would go.

Suddenly, close to the Place de la Madeleine, a bright light reflected on the foot-way from an *entresol*, made me look up. I saw a window lighted from within, and a female form passing to and fro. There could be no mistake; the uplifted arms putting on a bonnet, and the twisting and turning in front of a glass were the gestures of a woman getting ready to go out.

The light vanished from the window; a few seconds later the door in the gateway opened. A little furry ball flew out into the street, barking furiously, and was followed by a woman wrapped to the eyes, a white veil over her head, her hands in a sealskin muff, and a fur collar as deep as my own almost covering her back hair. All this did not, however, so far disguise her face as to prevent my recognizing her by the light of a street lamp as the fair president of the guild of Paris florists, the Isabelle of our fashionable "mashers" and our "Kings in Exile."

"Mademoiselle—" I exclaimed, coming forward, "I have caught you in a romantic expedition—in the very act. I am master of your secret, you see: confess the whole since I have found out half."

"You, M——" said the amiable young lady, "how is it that you are out at this hour?"

"But you?—"



"Oh! that is a very different matter. I have an engagement."

"Indeed. I will escort you."

"You would be very much astonished if I took you at your word; you are half-asleep, and your white tie—"

"I assure you I do not mean to leave you."

"Then give me an arm. I shall be very glad of it; the pavement is slippery."

"And which way are we going?"

"To the Halle, my dear fellow."

So it was. She carried me off there; arm in arm we threaded our way along the dark cross-streets, her dog floundering through the snow a little way ahead.

Every morning does she make this expedition with no other companion, brave and alone through the night-shrouded city, and the police on their beat greet her as she passes :

"Good day, Mam'selle, a sharp morning!"

"Yes indeed, very sharp."

And it is sharp during the six winter months; so cruel that quite half the gardeners' daughters who sell the hothouse flowers on the "Paris" side of the market, die of consumption in a couple of seasons.

\* \* \*

Roses are dear this morning.

"What! twenty francs for ten blooms! But what price do you suppose I can sell them for?"

"Look at the stems, Mademoiselle, only look at the stems."

"How long are they?"

"More than three-quarters of a yard, you may take my word."

The buyer examines them, shrugs her shoulders, and finally takes the bunch. For long stems are the pride of the florist, the patent of nobility in a nosegay. A branch of lilac of any pretensions must be more than a yard and a half in length. Nay, they have been seen as much as two yards and a quarter long, shooting to the ceiling. You know what a price the florist asks for her great works : their weight in gold; but

she herself has paid an enormous price for the flowers. She carries off twenty pounds' worth in her brougham which is waiting for us in the market square. Happily the horse puts his best foot foremost, and the drive from the Halle is a short one, or we should have soon died in the well padded little box, with those heaps of flowers lying at our feet and on our knees, tickling our faces and necks, darkening the panes, opening out in the warmth of our bodies, and exhaling heady scents which make the brain dizzy.

The Boulevard is by this time waking up to the stir of day; little girls, bare-headed, trotting smartly to work; the newsmen thrusting papers under the doors; the baker's woman with loaves on her head, a walking statue at whom artists turn to stare. The shop-shutters are being taken down, and the florist's servants come and release us from our flowery durance.

"Quick, François, take these to the ice-room."

The rosebuds retire at once to the cellar. Some will be kept there in prison for a fortnight or more; they would open too quickly in the heat of the shop. They require this preliminary apprenticeship in the dark, this time of seclusion, while their fragrance mellows and gains power, till they expand at leisure before they enter on public life in full dress of bows and lace. As they are carried down they meet on the stairs those which are coming up to the light of day, having learnt the part they are to play, and the gaudier blossoms which are to take their place in the shop-window and attract the eye of purchasers.

Waiting for them is their lady's-maid. *La Coloriste*, she is called in the trade. Her talent is a rare one, and very well paid: she can easily earn three hundred francs a month (twelve pounds), and gives herself airs at that, for she knows by experience, that it would be difficult to find a substitute. You should see her sitting at her table where the flowers are laid out like paints on a palette. She thinks out her combinations according to the material before her; complementary colours, or impressionist harmonies which would quite shock M. Chevreul. But they always are a success. You fine ladies who come from a walk so proud of the nosegay you have put together hap-hazard, as the flowers chanced to come,

you would never dream of the subtleties of colour which the flower-artist can detect, the refined half-tints which give her work distinction and character.

Lilac alone displays above a hundred shades and tones for her to choose from, a whole scale of delicate gradations, from a sombre purple, through endless varieties—the old pinkish mauve of Louis XV, the lilac of Charles X—to a creamy buff and the milky whiteness produced in hothouse cellars by the use of matting and gradual exposure to light.

This genuine artist—call her a colourist or merely a flower mounter as you will—has supplanted the old-fashioned bouquet maker who constructed nosegays on wires, as stiff as ornamented cakes. The decadence of this manipulation and the advent of the “colourist” are the most conspicuous facts in the history of French floriculture, the revolutionary era of the florist’s art.

Can you remember the age of the dreadful formal “bouquet,” the contemporary of crinolines and “Keepsakes,” which rejoiced the bad taste of our mothers? The hapless blossom, bereft of its stalk and impaled on the end of a wire like a pike, perished in a few hours of loss of juices, and of the horrid weapon buried in its heart. But who cared? The withered bouquet was tossed aside at once with its ragged trimming of lace paper. In those days no one really loved flowers for their own sake; the attention enjoined by fashion was all in all the symbol of silent devotion, the tribute of a love as transient as the messenger blossoms.

In these days flowers have ceased to convey these mean errands of caution. They are hailed as friends, the light and ornament of home. They are made to live as long as possible and are treated as honoured guests; menial hands may not touch them; the mistress herself waits upon them and gives them fresh water each morning. The intimacy lasts till the petals fall at the foot of the costly vase that holds them, under the too rough breath of a fan. And the flowers, finding themselves so handsomely treated, will not be behind their fair owners in gracious deeds. They bequeath to them the lace they have worn, to edge a handkerchief or a petticoat. The fashion of selling flowers in these costly



ruffs is so popular just now, that a florist whom I could name employs all the hands of a Belgian lace-factory.

These delicate trimmings are more especially lavished on flowers for ladies' shoulder-knots. The bouquet that is to be worn on the body of a dress is to the mounter like a miniature in which every touch has a purpose. Her ideal is that a connoisseur should be able at once to say :

"This bouquet was arranged for a young girl, that for a bride; here is one intended for a young woman; this is for some white-haired duchess."

Then matching the flowers to the dress is an anxious task, hitting on exactly the right pitch of colour that will be really decorative, melting harmoniously into the general effect of silks and ribbons, and yet distinct enough to catch the eye, and, by chance as it were, lead it to rest without impertinence on the throbbing whiteness of a woman's skin.

A skilful mounter must train her eye to these subtleties, and yet not sacrifice the breadth of vision which is needed for composing decorations on a larger scale. Come and watch the fairy hands which have put a frail posy together, leaf by leaf, for a lady's bosom, as she now fills them with large bunches of flowers brought to her in baskets by her subordinates and pupils to "dress" the window every morning. A window dressing is designed like a fresco. The colour must be dashed on in broad and telling patches, in bunches, in sheaves; with a bold instinct for necessary sacrifice, and heroic decision as to the placing of a speck, a single splendid bloom. In the shade she will put azaleas, as full of blossom as heads of hydrangea; or rhododendrons with their dull foliage. Against their neutral shadow everything will tell, and the brightest colours will come out against this subdued tone without distracting the attention of the gazer which it is her aim to direct and concentrate. So a shelf is thrust forward, in front of the rhododendrons, to display the roses : "Jacqueminot," "Marshal Niel," "Paul Néron," heavenly hybrids; "Malmaisons" with half dried tears, florid "Gloires de Dijon;" "La France," grand "Rothschilds" clothed in purple, "Niphetos," sisters of the American "Oceana," as white, as fragrant, and as lasting. Then in the middle, in a clear white glass on a pedestal, a bunch of black iris. No bows, no lace, no gilt basket. But this is, nevertheless, the unique

rarity, the unknown flower which, without sacrilege, might wreath the golden cup of the Holy Grail. Men's lives have been spent in the search for it. A family of gardeners hunted it down. The grand-parents died without ever laying hands on it; but lo! it has bloomed for a great grandson, the Iris foreshadowed in the dreams of two generations of artists. Night after night has watch been kept over the sacred bulbs; the garden walls were raised and fenced with a bristling crown of curled spikes. Robbery and murder have been a terror by reason of that flower—what matter now? The flower is here. Once more man has triumphed over nature.

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CYTHERA'S RECORD

Saturday evening. Of all days of the week, Saturday is that which brings most masculine customers to the flower-shop. They come to buy a carnation for their button-hole, and to order baskets of flowers to be sent to the fair ones they are courting.

Ensconced in a corner of the shop, behind a hedge of azaleas in bloom, I looked on while the file of purchasers passed in and out. And a very amusing time I spent, for at my elbow sat the demon Asmodeus, disguised for the nonce as a pretty flower-seller, who, as these young gentlemen came in, whispered in my ear the love affairs of fashionable Paris.

A fine young fellow first appears on the scene, pale, with an auburn beard. His expression is indifferent, impertinent, weary.

"Monsieur Max," says the lady of the shop with her most gracious smile. "Here you are once more; you have been faithless; I have not seen you for a week past."

I give Asmodeus a nudge and ask in a whisper :

"Is this gentleman known here by his Christian name?"

"He is one of our most regular customers," says my little Familiar. "He buys, one year with another, above fifteen thousand francs worth of flowers. His January account alone, pays our basket bill."

The lady at the counter is still smiling encouragement.

"And what would you like this evening?"

"Two bunches of lilac as usual."

"Alike?"













"No, no. You know very well : one for a hundred francs and one for two hundred."

"One hundred to be sent to the Boulevard Malesherbes?"

"And two hundred to the Avenue de Villiers."

"The cheap one for his wife and the dear one for his mistress," murmurs the malignant little voice. "At any rate he has the decency to be civil to both."

So you see that in flower-land a conscience is a luxury for the rich.

Monsieur Max is gone, leaving the door to slam. Another figure immediately appears on the threshold : an older man with a grizzled beard and a hard profile ; a neck like a prize-fighter's and a jaw like a shark's. His skin is as yellow as the gold he takes out of his waistcoat pocket and tosses contemptuously on the counter. The florist has a smile for him too, but it is not the same smile as she shed on Monsieur Max. It is polite, but a little nervous, without the familiarity of complicity.

Asmodeus gives me a little push.

"Don't you know him?"

"Of course I do. Azvedo, the Maltese banker."

The man of gold says in a hard, sharp tone, and with an absent manner :

"Another basket of orchids."

"To the same address?"

No reply, only a nod, a twist to the right about on his low heels, four steps to the door, and it slams behind him.

The shop mistress is studying her ledger, she turns back a few pages and then exclaims in a tone of triumph :

"Fifteen baskets of flowers in fifteen days, all to the same address! I never knew him so constant before. The lady is obdurate, it would seem!"

"What lady?" I cannot help exclaiming. And springing out of my hiding-place I say : "Pray, Mademoiselle, show me your order-book."

But Asmodeus holds me by the arm, and with a stern finger on her lip she says : "Nay, my friend—that order-book is Cythera's Record. It may only be opened by the initiated—No, no. Do not insist; to

read is torture and death. You laugh and do not believe me—then listen to a story I will tell you.

“It is now nearly three years ago. I was sitting at the counter, as I usually do all day, when a remarkably handsome young man, a stranger to us, came into the shop. He ordered an enormous bunch of lilac, and desired that it should be sent to an address which he gave. I wrote it, as I always do, in that big book, and ordered the flower-mounter to set to work. This customer had scarcely left the shop when a young lady came in, so pale that she had only strength to say: ‘I want some roses,’ when she dropped on to a chair. We showed her ‘La France’ and ‘Malmaison’ roses; she chose some at hap-hazard and said: ‘You will send them to me?’

“I asked her name and address. ‘Oh!’ said she, starting up, ‘my name is a foreign one, difficult to spell. Let me write it in your book myself.’

“I had no suspicions; I gave her the book. She glanced at the two lines I had just written on the page, the address where I was to send the bunch of lilac. She gave a little cry: ‘What is the matter, Madame?’

“‘I beg your pardon—I am very weak—I thought I was going to faint.’ And with fevered haste, as if she had recovered her failing strength: ‘There,’ she said, ‘send me the roses I chose, and send me other flowers, an armful; all that have the strongest scent—orange flowers, tuberose, send me basket-loads.’

“Two days later the newspapers betrayed the lady’s secret. Our first customer was the husband. The young wife, warned of his infidelity by an anonymous letter which did not give her rival’s name, had been following him about for two days. She saw him come into the flower shop and give an order; then she came in after him and read the name she wanted to know in our order-book. It was that of her dearest friend.

“My dear fellow, there are women whom it is not well to betray. This one was a tender, romantic creature—— She could not survive the blow. The very evening after this fatal discovery, having dismissed her maid, she locked herself into her room and heaped her pillow and her bed with the flowers, of which she had ordered a barrow-load, and so

drowned herself, like Albine, in poisonous scents. So you see flowers can poison.

"And they can stab, too. You know Princess Mimeska; all Paris knows her, she is as well conducted as she is handsome, now that a merciful divorce has set her free. But I knew her at a time when she was still Comtesse de Barnetal, and when, as an injured and insulted wife, she used to come and order flowers to be sent to the man she loved, from whom she was parted, and to whom she might not write, but who reigned supreme in her heart. Well, one day, the Comtesse was standing, as you are now, by that desk. She had ordered up some white roses that she might see what their effect would be, and was pointing out the place where she wished them set, on a sketch she herself had made. It was the outline of a royal coronet, the prince's coronet; she wished to send him the flowers as a souvenir on an anniversary.

"We had our heads together, leaning over the flowers when the door was thrown open and the Comte de Barnetal rushed in. He seized his wife by the arm and muttered: 'I have caught you, Madame, this time! You cannot deny it!'

"'I have never denied anything,' she said. She spoke with such a flash of scorn in her eyes and tone that, wretch as he was, I felt a spasm of pity for a man so deeply loathed.

"'Die—' was all he said in a hollow voice; and if the Comtesse had not instinctively shrunk aside, the stiletto with which he struck at her must certainly have pierced her heart. As it was it stabbed her in the arm, making a small wound; a few drops of blood fell on the counter and stained the snowy petals of the 'Niphetos' roses.

"Madame de Barnetal did not utter a sound. She tied her little cambric handkerchief round and round her arm, and then went away with tragic dignity—without a word. You know the end of that affair—the scandal—the divorce.

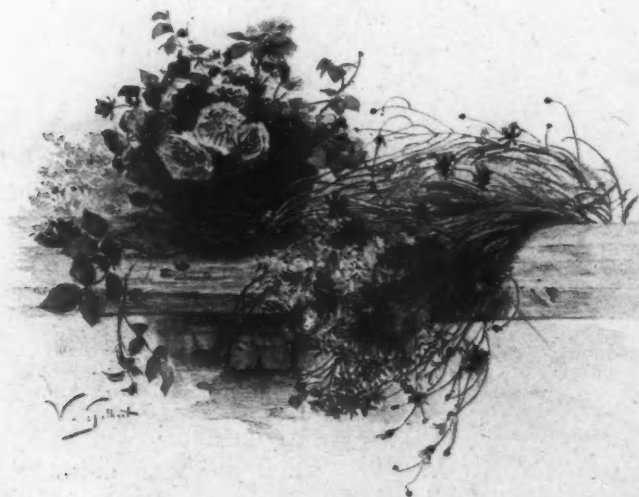
"These are the stories my big book can tell. Perhaps you think these back-stairs adventures amusing; perhaps you are more disappointed than ever at my forbidding you to turn over its pages. You should thank



me rather for sparing you a pang : this is the Book of Undeceiving. In it the history of every passion may be traced from its birth to its death; we detect what has fed it, how it has blazed into madness—how short a time it has lived. In this book the fairest before whom you now bow, saying, 'She at least is pure,' has left the counterfoils of her sin, a damning record for eternity. Here the young widow, whose weeping constancy edifies sympathetic souls, has taken us into her confidence, and betrayed her hypocrisy. Here are the instructions left by the bridegroom who is leading some young girl to the altar, while his friends whisper : 'This indeed is a love match'—to send every day, with unfailing punctuality, the flowers he has ordered for an old flame from whom he parted but yesterday to meet again to-morrow.

"No, leave that book sealed if you care to keep a single sentimental illusion. Never read those ten thousand chapters of the unvarying tale of love : *Un peu*—*Beaucoup*—*Passionnément*—*Pas du tout!*—"

HUGUES LE ROUX.





CLAUDE LARCHER'S STORY

*To Luigi Gualdo.*

There is a good deal of talk about democracy, as time goes on—or totters on, as a misanthrope of my acquaintance used to put it. I do not, however, believe that our manners have taken that decided turn for equality, which folks with a fancy for ready-made formulæ make out. I doubt for instance whether a real Duchess—there are some left—has less haughty disdain to-day, than her grandmother had a hundred odd years ago. The Faubourg Saint-Germain, whatever scoffers or insulters may think, still exists. It is only a little more “the noble faubourg” than before, through the effect of reaction. Many of the women of whom it is composed, your occupant of the second floor in the Rue de Varenne, as plainly dressed for lack of money as any woman of the middle class, takes as much pride as the “Grande Demoiselle” herself, in treating the queens of fashion and of “smart” Paris society as upstarts. This very fashion, vulgarised as it is affirmed to be in the common saying: “Nowadays everybody dresses well,” ranks in its turn as a privilege. Whatever point of view be taken, whether fundamentals be considered or forms,

principles or external appearances, the pretended fusion of classes, a common theme for the dithyrambs or the satire of moralists, only appears such to superficial observers. The aristocracy of titles and that of fashion—they are two distinct things—remain closed as much as, if not more than, in the last century, when a mere talent for conversation enabled a Rivarol or a Chamfort to sup with the finest gentlemen, when the Prince de Ligne entertained Casanova the adventurer, when noble lords paved the way for the night of the fourth of August by other nights whose licence had no small share of the spirit of equality. It is only fair to say that democracy has, in one direction, provided a set-off against the inherited inequality consisting in the possession of great names or an historic past, by establishing a real political inequality for the benefit of those who are the children of their own deeds and to whom it entrusts all functions of State. It has also multiplied and brought within the reach of all men, and women too, an “all but” degree of luxury, elegance, and “smartness,” which looks like the real thing—from a distance. This “all but” has its symbol and its chief means of action in those big establishments where a woman can get a dress like one of Worth’s, stylish furniture, curious knickknacks; but toilet, furniture, knickknacks are “almost” the real thing—and this “almost” suffices to maintain the difference.

This difference between the real thing and the approximation to it, has never been brought out more clearly for me than when associating, as I have done at divers times, with young Parisians of the pleasure-seeking class. I have them before my eyes at this moment, as though grouped in a symbolic table. First, there is at the top the real *viveur*, the man who really possesses the hundred and fifty thousand francs a year demanded by la *grande fête*—as they call it—or who manages to obtain them. This man combines with the money a name already known, ready-made claims on influential people in society, and that sort of precocious familiarity with expenditure which entails that a young fellow, if he ruins himself, shall at least know the reason why. His place was marked out in advance in the members’ list of two or three foremost clubs that middle-class snobs take years to force their way into. The young fellow may be with all this a very able or a very mediocre sort of youth,



may traverse Paris without losing his foothold or may sink forthwith in the ocean of temptations that surround him. Meanwhile, he is the king of this Paris of ours. It is for him that the enormous city labours, for him is the whole output of this colossal mine of pleasures. If he has intrigues in the world or the half-world, it is with women like himself, with those whose underlinen alone means a fortune, and whose refinement at the present time is not to be surpassed. *First class ladies*, they are called by the Anglo-Saxons of the baser sort, accustomed to ticket everything like goods for sale. Whether this young man drive a phaeton harnessed by his own horses, or, being of a practical turn of mind, use the club cabs, be assured that his rooms are as comfortable as an English nobleman's, as crowded with curios and flowers as a fashionable courtesan's, that he never sits down to a repast that is not fit for a prince, that the least of his personal knicknacks are in keeping with the most extravagant degree of dissipation. In short, the odds are he ruins himself in the old way, in this matter-of-fact century, by some fantastic mode of life fit to delight the shade of old Lauzun : free to follow out the old fashion to the end, and, when verging on the forties, to take back from the feminine sex, in the form of a handsome dowry, all the money he has lavished on it. Immediately below this *viveur* of the grand sort, you will find the approximation in an almost similar personage who falls short, however, somewhere, either in nobility or social position, in fortune or in personal tact. This type will be a man of the middle classes ashamed of his origin, a timid man trying to play the cynic, a foreigner in the process of becoming a naturalised Parisian, a quiet man who has taken to pleasure because it is the thing, or simply just one of those indefinable boobies around whom some ridiculous story is bound to centre within a given time. This approximation to the *viveur in chief* has his own approximation. The latter will be some tradesman's son for whom the club in the Rue Royale is the *Ultima Thule*, the inaccessible land of the old navigators, and who, on leaving the theatre of an evening, has to put up with the Café de la Paix. He is a first-nighter like the rest, but without having his right of entry into any of the boxes where the queens of fashion sit to be wooed. He treats himself to the women who have the highest quotations on the Exchange of Gallantry,

but he has never managed to make one of these the rage himself, nor to establish an intimacy with a woman of society, which shall be talked of in the clubs as a sort of morganatic marriage. And this approximation of an approximation, has an approximation of his own in the rich student come up from the country to get initiated into "life," and who goes into vice as people used to go into the Church. This student wears just the same collars, stiff as marble, the same hats, gleaming like a sabre, the same dress-coat and the same boots. But his favourite restaurant is situated on the left bank of the Seine. He bears, spread over his whole person, something that betrays the other side of the water. Only to look at him you feel that he makes for Paris-at-play from the retreat of a furnished lodging in the Rue des Écoles. His mistresses, too, are the approximations of the big *cocottes*, Boulevard Saint-Michel women jealously imitating the women of the Folies-Bergère, and above these in an ascending scale is the whole series of kept women, from the one who continues the traditions of the *lorette*—rooms at a rental of three thousand francs and the rest at corresponding prices—up to the courtesan of a higher order or less disorder, whom accommodating friends may introduce to a foreign prince on a trip to Paris, without his Highness, accustomed though he be to the sumptuous minutiae of regal state, being offended by a single solecism of toilet or surroundings. And thus it is, that social nature, as invincible in its decrees as physical nature, imposes this law of hierarchy, unknown to the theorists who prate about equality, in a domain which is on the surface one of the sheerest fantasy, and the most freely abandoned to caprice.

Among the spectacles which are capable of gratifying the curiosity of the moralist, one of the most curious is undoubtedly that of the metamorphoses of a character in process of passing from one of these approximations to another. This spectacle is one that I have often treated myself to, on coming across an old comrade again after a few years, or, it may be, a few months. Rarely have I been able to follow out the different stages of this kind of social evolution—if that is not too big a word for a very small thing—as I have done in the case of a young man named Louis Servin, whom particular circumstances had enabled me to



study almost in the egg. Here was I, twelve years ago—Louis was fourteen then—separated from my family, all supplies cut off, and obliged to utilise, in view of taking to letters as a profession, the little Latin and Greek that still remained to me from my school days. A few lessons in the day, and many an ink-stained sheet of paper at night—such was my lot at that period. Among my chance pupils was Louis Servin. His father, a capital fellow, of almost American activity, had gained and lost a fortune twice over. He had ultimately established a drapery business which, under the very simple sign, *Au bon drap*, provided perhaps the keenest competition that the famous *Belle Jardinière* has had to meet. Louis was the only and utterly spoiled son of this robust worker and of a pretentious woman who had had a grandmother with a title. Even at this tender age Louis was quite the vainest boy I have ever known. He attended the classes at the Lycée Charlemagne, and he was discontented on account of its being a democratic school. His eyes gleamed when he spoke of one of his little comrades who followed the classes at the Lycée Bonaparte. But, you see, there was papa Servin's shop in the Rue Saint-Antoine. The child was already so far gone in instinctive paltriness, that he knew on what floor each of his playfellows lived, and I have never heard him speak kindly to me about a friend who lived higher than the second floor! The ingenuousness of this tomfoolery diverted me in the course of our Latin lessons to such a point, that I couldn't consent to lose sight of a subject so well qualified to become a snob of the first water. As a law student Louis fulfilled the promises of his early youth. He was one of the first to import into the *brasseries* of the Latin Quarter the costumes and attitudes of the *gommeux*—that was the word in vogue in that far off time—whom he had been able to catch a glimpse of at the theatre or the races. Luck favoured him. The father he was ashamed of died suddenly, and in concert with his mother, who was as vain as himself, the son disposed of the business. He was overjoyed to watch the disappearance from the shop front of that name of Servin which he was already proposing to modify by adding to it that of Figon. This was the name of the maternal grandmother. At this juncture he started for Italy, accompanied by a certain Pauline Marly,



who had been, at one time, the object of the favours of a rather exalted personage, and he returned in a year with visiting cards inscribed at full length with these magic syllables, Servin de Figon, and I received an invitation from his mother, who, in her turn, signed her note Thérèse Servin de Figon! It was the signal of a new life for Louis, which he inaugurated by an entire break with all his old acquaintances. An exception was made in favour of those whom he knew to be, like myself, more or less frequenters of all social circles. This was the period of "first-nights", of the Café de la Paix, and of sighs and longings for the big club. In what fashionable drinking bar did he get acquainted with the handsome Marquis de Vardes, and after how many cocktails, consumed by the pair, did this genuine member of the "smart" set get interested in the efforts of the young vulgarian to un-Servinize himself? The fact remains that for months Louis Servin de Figon, now become S. de Figon, after the orthodox receipt, hung on the Marquis as the Scapins of the old comic stage hung on to the Léandres, with one of those persistent displays of flattery that endure all rebuffs, accept all kinds of servility, and triumph over every degree of repugnance. Philippe de Vardes, whose over-indulgence in cheap successes had not destroyed his native kindliness, went so far as to give his admirer lessons in dress, and also some advice as to the pushing of his influential acquaintanceships. "He is young yet," he would say, when questioned about S. de Figon, "but in two or three years' time, we shall make something of him——" He spoke of him as he would speak of his claret. The influence of this kind protection did not, however, go so far as to force the doors of the Rue Royale paradise in favour of his *protégé*. The Servin was not yet sufficiently a thing of the past, and, moreover, Louis had wanted to go ahead a little too fast. Some too sumptuous dinners given to one or two broken down aristocrats had brought upon him a certain amount of sneaking envy. A last remnant of practical common sense, inherited from Papa Servin, had opened his eyes to this fault and to others as well, and he gave in blindly to Vardes. Two trips to England, in his indulgent protector's train had given him a glimpse of cosmopolitan society, and now his mother, dead in her turn, must have leapt in her tomb with joy. He no

longer associated with any but titled people or millionaires, and the Prince of Wales knew his name!

Interesting as such a sample of middle class vanity may be for a novelist, it is soon seen through, classified, defined, ticketed, and yet, when my old servant Ferdinand, one July evening two years ago, brought me an English visiting-card on which there was simply Louis de Figon, I did not answer with an energetic: "Say I'm not at home——" On the contrary, I rubbed my hands and begged him with the most joyous impatience to show my unexpected visitor in. It is right to add that I had done a hard day's work, and when a writer has ten hours' smart copy in his head and between his fingers, his intellectual beatitude is so complete as to render him indulgent to the worst of bores. But the sham de Figon is not only a bore, he is also a *catoblepas*. The word is one which I beg the reader to be good enough to allow me. I have borrowed it from Flaubert's *Tentation de Saint Antoine*, when he speaks of that animal so absolutely stupid that it once ate its own paws without knowing it. "Its stupidity fascinates me——" says the hermit. In the same way there are to be met about the world puppets so profoundly serious in their silliness, so wholly sincere in their ridiculousness, that a sort of incomprehensible fascination emanates from their folly, as from the *catoblepas* in the *Tentation*. Literature has created a certain number of them, of which the most remarkable is Joseph Prudhomme. The *catoblepas* is not simply the funny personage, it is essential that the comic character be united in him with a deformity of human nature so absolutely constitutional, as to make him the equivalent, in the moral order, of the hideous dwarfs who were the pets of the princes of old time. He must correspond in us to that singular taste for the ugly, of which the art of the far East attests the definite predominance among certain races. Am I devoted to it myself? Certain it is that the visit of my old pupil, on the summer evening I am speaking of, gave me real pleasure, and that I gave the order to admit him with a kind of thirst to find him up to the level of his old ridiculous self, a thirst that was not balked when he walked into my study. What motive brought him? I never gave a thought to the question.



Physically he is in capital form. Servin de Figon is tall and slim, with a long-nosed face, a small forehead and a sort of indefinable air of self-sufficiency in the region of the mouth and cheeks. Inevitably, in his presence, you call to mind the proverb "as proud as a peacock," and you recognize an extraordinary identity of physiognomy between the bird and the face. From the sides of this too pointed countenance, starts a pair of too prominent ears. A parting down the middle of the head divides the black hair into two shiny and carefully pomaded slabs. The moustache is of a different colour from the hair, almost red, and its curl bears evidence to a daily twist of the tongs. But what gives the final touch to Louis' most extraordinary expression of human vanity is a certain fashion of throwing the head back with a contemptuous lowering of the eyelids, which are then slowly raised, while the mouth speaks and smiles at its own words. Only to see such a smile any casual stranger would say of this young man: "What a heap of affectation!" Without even taking into account his more than affected get-up, Louis copies his master, Philippe de Vardes, with such embarrassing fidelity that the Marquis has need of all his good humour not to detest this caricature of himself. Philippe is athletic and full-blooded. He wears cut-away coats and tight jackets which shew off his muscles. These same coats and jackets on Louis' big, lanky body, exaggerate its thinness more than ever. Philippe, with his almost too highly florid complexion, can stand the bright colours that give Louis' *papier-mâché* face the greenish hue of a corpse. The Marquis's slight British accent is explained by the fact that his mother was Scotch, and that he himself has lived as much in London as in Paris, whereas the son of the proprietor of the *Bon Drap* has never known any more English than the racing terms which he mispronounces. And then, there are some of the master's little tricks apparent on the pupil's lips, as for instance, a certain "*Ça est—*" which is incessantly recurring.

"Why, what a comfortable crib this is of yours," he says to me as he comes in, as though quite surprised at not finding his old tutor, turned novelist, in some wretched garret; and drawing from his pocket a silver cigarette-case on which the count's coronet makes its first



appearance : "You won't have one? Capital Egyptian cigarettes— Philippe and I get them from Cairo direct— It was Lord—" (here one of the best names in the Peerage) "who gave us the address— You don't know him? Ah! a charming man, my dear fellow, charming, and such good style— We had a spread together the other day at Philippe's— Only one wine at dinner, Château-Margaux, '75— Well, Bob made all the running." (His eyelids blinked while he thus alluded to a nobleman who would not have let Papa Servin furnish his servant's liveries.) "Viollas was there, a cousin of the little Dutacq, the pretty blonde who is like Lady—" (here another extract from the Peerage). "Hanged if Bob doesn't ask out loud with his haw-demme air and his accent : 'A jolly woman, the little Dutacq— who is she spoons on?' 'Sir,' interrupted Viollas, 'Madame Dutacq is my cousin—' And what do you think Bob answered? 'I didn't ask you that, sir, I asked you who she was spoons on—' There's a last-century speech for you. How we shouted!"

There is no reproducing the mimicry with which he accompanied this discourse, the profound respect with which his voice became familiar in saying Philippe and Bob, then the contemptuous utterance of the plebeian names Viollas and Dutacq, and the echoes of the Marquis's tones in certain passages. I had a moment's unalloyed delight at seeing my *catoblepas* imitate himself to such perfection, and swaggering before a writer with no coat of arms, in the halo of the coats of arms of other people. All this did not explain to me as yet either his visit or the invitation he suddenly thrust on me, an invitation from a man I had only known for the past ten years to the extent of shaking hands with him at the theatre, or taking off my hat to him in the street.

"By the bye, are you disengaged this evening?" he asked me, and, on my replying in the affirmative : "I have a few friends to dinner, at a restaurant, at eight o'clock. We shall have, for male performers, Toré, Saveuse, Machault; and Christine Anroux and Gladys will be the ladies of the cast—" "Gladys who?" I asked, surprised at a name that recalled to me one of the most adorable girls I ever met, a Welsh-woman with deep blue eyes, golden hair, and a complexion that would make Rubens' carnations look brown by comparison.

"Gladys who?" cried Louis. "Why there is only one, our Gladys, the Creole, the woman who ruined little Bonnivet, she who said so prettily, 'She is bad form, that mother-in-law of mine, the Duchess——' In short, Gladys Harvey—— I have been a particular friend of hers for the past year." (Here a fresh blink of the eyelids.) "I cribbed her from José——" (here one of the greatest names in Spain). "The José, you know, who got up the bull fight at the Hippodrome, and then the minister refused to authorize it." He kept repeating: "She is a regular clipper is Gladys, and no mistake—— You must go out a bit, my dear fellow, and see a little life." (This time the *catoblepas* put the last touch to his fascination by patronising me.) "Ah! What a lot of subjects for novels I could suggest to you!—You accept?——"

I accepted—only to regret it, with the astounding logic characteristic of writers, while I was wending my way, two hours later, towards the place of my appointment, a restaurant close to the Cirque. "I am really too great an ass," I reflected, "to don evening dress in this weather! I'm not an accomplished gentleman like Figon, who makes believe to be more comfortable in a swallow-tail!" I crossed the Esplanade of the Invalides, thoughts like this running in my head, giving free rein to my Bohemian ill-humour against so-called fashionable life, but amused all the same by the carriages that swept by in such dashing style! It was one of those evenings in the beginning of summer when there floats, through Paris, a sort of vapour of pleasure. The Parisians of both sexes who have stayed in town have stayed there for amusement's sake. Our chance guests from the provinces or abroad are not here from any other motive either. The result is, as the July dusk comes over the scene, a really happy population. The foliage of the trees, fading rather than faded, the evening languor of the atmosphere, the splendid sunset effects behind the slender towers of the Trocadéro or the imposing mass of the Arc de Triomphe, a kind of indifference and of relaxation, as it were, in the attitude of the passers-by, all contribute to the impression of a city of pleasure, particularly in the half exotic quarter, with its abundance of princely mansions and its architectural magnificence. "These people are all on pleasure bent——"



I reflected as I looked at the people in the street. "Do as they do——" And I gave myself up to picturing the guests I was about to join in a few minutes. Toré, first of all? Albert Toré, an old buck; fairer than nature is fair, very rosy about the gills, with a sort of ghost-like smile mechanically imprinted upon his venerable lips, the greatest Anglo-maniac of all the Frenchmen I have ever known to be given that way. He has, be it added, a delicious touch of the ridiculous, that of fancying himself irresistible, because he was for fifteen years the recognized fancy-man of an English Duchess. His posthumous cult of this great lady, dead and buried years ago, is evinced by the most outrageous familiarities with the women he meets nowadays, who, clearly, would never think of rebuffing a man once favoured by Lady——. He, too, is a *cato-blépas*, but a dull one. Saveuse? The Baron de Saveuse. There is nothing ridiculous about him. He is a pretty fellow, though a trifle pitted, witty, and well-informed even, but it is as well to be blind to the fact that his fine airs are at the mercy of shifty expedients, and that his friends are given to calling him the statue of the *demandeur*. What a lot it must have cost Louis Servin de Figon to get the Baron's feet under his mahogany! As for Machault, 'tis a giant with no other delight in the world than fencing, a gladiator in swallow-tail and white waistcoat, who only quits one bout for another, one fencing-room for another. A capital fellow, to be sure, but one who can't talk to you for five minutes without the parry in *quart* creeping in. I like this man better than all the others, and a dinner with him would never bore me, for if he's a monomaniac for the rapier, it has to be said that he is as brave as his weapon, and that it has never occurred to him to make use of his extraordinary skill to excuse an insolent word. If he is an athlete, he is so to suit his own pleasure and not for fashion's sake. Well, well! this dinner will be endurable, as far as the men are concerned, but the women? Christine Anroux? I know her only too well. With her hair in plaits, her candid eyes, her pseudo-virginal features, she is the type of the abandoned woman who gives herself the airs of a lady, and in whom one expects fearful depths of vulgar matter-of-fact. This type comes from some procuress's,



yet will hardly let you make use of a free and easy expression. When she is fifty, Christine will have a million or more, she will have got herself orthodoxly married to some respectable donkey, and she will play at being the Lady Bountiful of some country village. There is nothing more commonplace than such a creature as this, and nothing to which men offer less resistance. And Gladys will be another Christine. Bah! I will be off as soon as dinner is over. And again I wondered, why on earth has Louis invited me there, off-hand, me, Claude Larcher, who have no longer even the vogue of my two first pieces to count on, and who slave away for the newspapers like the poor devil of a literary journeyman that I am. Can some titled lady possibly have praised my last article to Figon?

I did the poor fellow an injustice, as I plainly saw from the first word his mistress said to me, as I entered the room of the fashionable restaurant where all the guests were already gathered together. I was the last to arrive. This small room, that the porter, as he took me to it, had called the Rose Room, looked out on a covered terrace, around which trembled fantastically illuminated foliage. Under the trees of the restaurant grounds was a Hungarian band, who were playing their national airs with that mingling of langour and frenzy that makes their music the most soothing and, at the same time, the most enervating of any. In the room the light of the candles competed with the last remnant of daylight that lingered in the gloaming, the chandeliers, in which the candles were burning, were buried in garlands of flowers. More flowers decked the table, and betrayed the hand of Saveuse, whose searching glance was mechanically inspecting every detail. To see the correct get-up of the men and the toilet of the two women, Christine all in blue, and Gladys all in white, it was impossible to believe oneself in the private domain of the half-world. Lovely pearls were twisted round their necks, they were in half evening dress, with a deliciously aristocratic air, and youthful beauty amid refined surroundings will always have for my nerves, artist and plebeian that I am, so powerful an attraction that I at once gave up philosophizing and regretting my easy compliance with the Sire de Figon's off-hand invitation, all the more that, a moment

after my greeting her, Gladys said to me in a slight English accent and with the tip of her teeth— charming teeth they are, by the way : “Has your friend told you that, for the past six months at least, I have been begging him to get you to dine with me, and it nearly fell through after all. He only learnt this morning that you were in Paris—but I made him go and look you up on the spot. If you had not been disengaged I should have been sincerely disappointed.”

I put the case to better men than myself. Who would not have been glad to be thus addressed by a creature of the most delicious aspect? Gladys is tall. Her bare arms—she wore on the right arm, close up to the shoulder, a bow of black velvet—are admirably modelled. Her waist is slim, without being pinched. Her corset gave a hint of a girlish bust, although she was close on her thirtieth year, just as, in the way her dress hung in simple folds about her, you recognized the woman all suppleness and agility, the tennis player she has always been, famous among the wielders of the racquet. Her most jealous rivals grant her accomplished elegance in the art of dress. Her supple and dainty little hands reveal her Creole origin, they were wearing *Suède* gloves at the moment, were these little hands, and waving a fan of dark feathers giving out a faint sweet perfume. This Creole origin of hers is recognizable by all sorts of details in her mobile features. The mouth is somewhat strongly marked, her dark eyes, when she gets excited, open a little too wide. “They are almond shaped,” she says with a smile, “but the wrong way up!—” The expression of these eyes, by turns wondering and full of sadness, crafty and romantic, the rapid quivering of the nostrils; the trembling smile, give a mobility to her countenance that proclaims a creature of fantasy and passion. It seems as though there were something of the eighteenth-century courtesan in Gladys, and just a touch, as well, of the remorselessly calculating loose woman of our matter-of-fact and brutal age. This evening she was wearing a white dress fastened by a sapphire at the throat, and a bow of red ribbon in her chestnut hair shot with gold. As she spoke to me, I noticed her delicate cheek flush up, her fan tremble between her fingers. I felt a foolish impulse that I was soon punished for, but



that led me to take my place by her side with a lively pleasure, when Figon gave the signal for us to sit down to table with the touch of ceremony which he brings to the least act of his chosen career as a man of fashion. How strange it is to turn what ought to be a pleasure into a function, and to take amusement as a profession!

"Let us have a look at the *menu*," said Machault, gaily, while the chairs were being arranged, the napkins unfolded, and there was that interval of silence, with which every repast starts off. "I have two fencing bouts to work out of my arms—" and he shows off his biceps under the thin cloth of his summer dress-coat—"Ah, I have been having a set-to with a left-handed soldier. What a tough bit of work it was! By Jove! I should like to find a foil that would pink its man of its own accord—" He laughs aloud at his joke, then consulting the *menu*: "Well done! this is what I call a sensible dinner," and he reads out the list of dishes. "We shall actually have things we can eat. I congratulate you, Figon."

"Congratulate the right man," said Figon pointing to Saveuse. "Egad!" answered the latter, "it's a very simple business. What you want about this time of year, is to find animals who are not the victims of the tender passion. The ox is so no longer. The turkey's turn for it has not yet come— There you have the basis of this *menu*—and for the rest, all that is needed is a little inventiveness and a little talk with the *chef* himself—"

"Is there a *chef* you could recommend me?" interrupted Christine. "If I get married, I shall want one."

"Good," said Gladys, leaning towards me. "She will proceed to tell you that a prince has proposed to her and that she can't make up her mind!— And now it's the other's turn," she added, with a glance in the direction of Toré, who, seated on her right, was making unearthly grimaces. "The old boy is nudging me, he is thinking of his Duchess. You are a very jolly fellow," she called to Toré, tapping his knee with her fan, "but, trespassers beware!" Then, after a few minutes of general conversation: "You know Jacques Molan, Louis tells me?—" she asked.



"I used to know him very well," I answered, "he even dedicated his first novel to me."

"I know," she said, "*Cœur brisé*. Ah! how I revelled in that book!"

Her eyes became deep and full of changing light. There was an interval of silence between us. I should not be worthy to be styled a man of letters had I not felt, were it only for a second, the slight impression of vexation of a Trissotin compelled to listen to the praises of Vadius. Although for years we hardly met, Jacques Molan and I, except casually and without anything like a confidential talk, I have kept a feeling of sympathy for this man who was once my friend. I duly appreciate his talent, although his melancholy manner, all refinements and complexities, is not much to my taste, now that I have been cured of what we both used to call the malady of adjectives on the nerves. I am ready to write ten articles to show that Jacques excels in the analysis of feminine sentiment, that he has the subtlety of the philosopher and the tenderness of the poet. Yes, I will sing his praises with all my heart, and without betraying a trace of my private opinion about the faults of this kind of character. At the present moment, Jacques has become the most arid and insincere of men. He manœuvres his sensibility as bald people carefully manœuvre their few remaining hairs. The thirst for money and for notoriety is the sole passion that has remained sincere with this artist, worn out by success as others are by poverty and disasters. In every page from this sentimental novelist's pen there is a theatrical touch at bottom, which spoils all his effects of style to my ear, and a spice of the spoilt child which is repugnant to all my instincts of manhood. The misfortune is that this clear-sightedness of mine about Jacques' defects is accompanied by a sort of discontent that he has had such a success; that I am a little ashamed of— At present I was watching her as she sat in a reverie. The music of the Hungarians floated on the air, more languorous as the musicians themselves became languid with playing. The night had now fallen, and the foliage of the trees was outlined against a sky dotted with stars. The guests were chatting merrily and Saveuse was beginning a story how that very morning he had met, in the corridor of a private hotel, a certain Madame

de Forget. In this respect I have remained a greenhorn. I am still unable to understand the readiness with which certain Parisian men about town will betray a woman whose secret they have discovered. I daresay I shall get used to it in time. So Saveuse was saying : "Here's a pretty go, said I to myself, and what a nice little game I have poked my nose into—— This saint, if you please, who won't receive me on the pretext that I have no respect for her sex. She had not seen me, I ascend the stairs behind her, and watch her disappear behind a door without so much as knocking; I take note of the number, come down, and look at the visitors' list below. No entry against the number in question. My curiosity was so keenly aroused that I waited there an hour and a quarter by the clock, at the door of the hotel—— At the end of that time she reappears. I take off my hat respectfully, she gives me a dignified bow! But, ten minutes later, who did I see issue from the hotel door, too? Guess?—— Laurent, who is fool enough to blush up like a school-boy and to set off telling me, without my asking him the question, that he is come there to pay a visit to some country cousins. And to crown all, that big donkey of a de Moraines says to me at the club, as some one happened to mention the Forget's name : 'Do you know the poor young thing has been spending a couple of hours in a hospital again to-day? She will kill herself with her sick-nursing!'" "There I recognize the lot of them, your fine ladies,—" said Christine. "And I your fine gentlemen," said Machault, pointing at Saveuse, with an air of supreme contempt that for ever reconciled me to the brave fencer. His tone had been so cutting that there was an awkward pause. Saveuse smiled as though he had heard nothing, and suddenly Gladys who had been "moon struck," as Figon said to her, again turned towards me and asked : "What sort of a man exactly is Jacques Molan?"

"Bravo!" cried Christine, "here's Gladys talking literature!—— Larcher, ask her to show you her garter. She has embroidered on it for a motto the title of the last novel she has gone mad on—— Isn't it so, Gladys?"

"Quite true," said the latter, with a laugh. "You see," she added, speaking to me, "that if you want to sketch the half-world, it won't do to take me for a model. I am too half-hearted a *cocotte*—— What



would you have? That's the sort of thing I fill my head with instead of looking out for old men to pluck, or young only sons——" And addressing Christine : "Tell me how much you have put by this month with that syndicate of yours?"

Christine shrugged her shoulders, with a very sour smile.

"Yes, what sort of man is Jacques Molan?" Gladys persisted. "Ask me rather what sort of man he was!" I answered, "I have not seen him five times in the past two years."

"People change so little," she said, "look at Toré——"

The old Anglomaniac caught his name, and gave us a wink. The truth is that at this moment the light was full on his fair complexion and the golden brightness of his hair gave an irresistible touch of comicality to the ugliness of his wizened face. Everything in him was shining with a grotesque brilliance; his complexion lit up by the libations in which he was indulging without doing more than letting drop a monosyllable from time to time, his moistened lips, his shirt front, and the satin facing of his dress-coat. The conversation had resumed its course. Saveuse was telling a fresh story, keeping one eye on Machault, who was gulping down champagne and now and then laughing rather boisterously. Figon was dropping and raising his eyelids, as the case might be, with the serious air which made him so comic. Christine was listening to Saveuse, putting in an interruption here and there, and I, while uttering a string of book-review phrases about the old comrade of my Bohemian days, was admiring the way in which Gladys would every instant put questions to me that gave evidence of an assiduous reading of Jacques' novels. *Cœur brisé*, *Anciennes amours*, *Blanche comme un lys*, *Martyre intime*, she knew by heart these books, as affected as their titles. This time my envy knew no bounds. Evidently this woman had fallen madly in love with the writer through his books, and she had only got Figon to invite me, to ask me, no doubt, to arrange a meeting for her with the idol of her worship. I doubted no longer when at dessert she threw down her napkin in front of her and said : "Ah! how hot it is, M. Larcher; will you keep me company for a quarter of an hour on the terrace?"

"Ah!" she said, as she leaned over the balustrade among the foliage,



while the laughter of the companions we had deserted was wafted to us through the open windows, "what a life, and what silly creatures they are!— I have a friend who always calls me 'poor Beauty.' I won't say anything as to 'Beauty,' but 'poor!' Ah! how true!—" She took up a rose she had stuck in her bodice at the beginning of dinner and began to bite the petals, with an angry frown. Beneath us, tables whose white napery we could see through the green leafage were clattering with the sound of knives and forks. The Hungarians were still playing, and Gladys, after having thrown the plucked rose to the ground resumed, as she gently fanned herself :

"I told you I was such a poor specimen of a *cocotte* and here am I talking to you after the style of the first act of the *Dame aux camélias*! That is hardly the tune, is it, for a woman who gets her dresses from Laferrière's, whom the newspapers talk about as the fair Gladys, who drives her own horses in the Bois, whose remaining debts have just been paid by somebody else, and who yet grumbles— and all that, because I was thinking of my affair with Jacques Molan— Don't look at me, as though you were asking : 'Why, then, did you ask me what sort of a man he is?—' The whole affair in question happened here—" and she touched her forehead with the tip of her fan, "and here," and she put the fan to her heart!—"I have never seen him, never spoken a word to him, never written to him and yet it's quite a romance— Would you like me to tell it to you?—" she asked, giving me a side-glance. It was a little too clear that everything in this snug little party had been contrived so as to lead up to this question, from Figon's invitation up to the suggested visit to the terrace. But what made me pardon her the trickery of the little arrangement was the fact that she was a little bit ashamed and had the grace to confess it frankly. "Yes," she said, as though replying to my thoughts, "when the wish to see you came to me, it was more or less on that account, but if I had found you inclined to make game of me, you would have known nothing about it— What would you have? I feel sure that you are a good fellow and that we shall be friends."

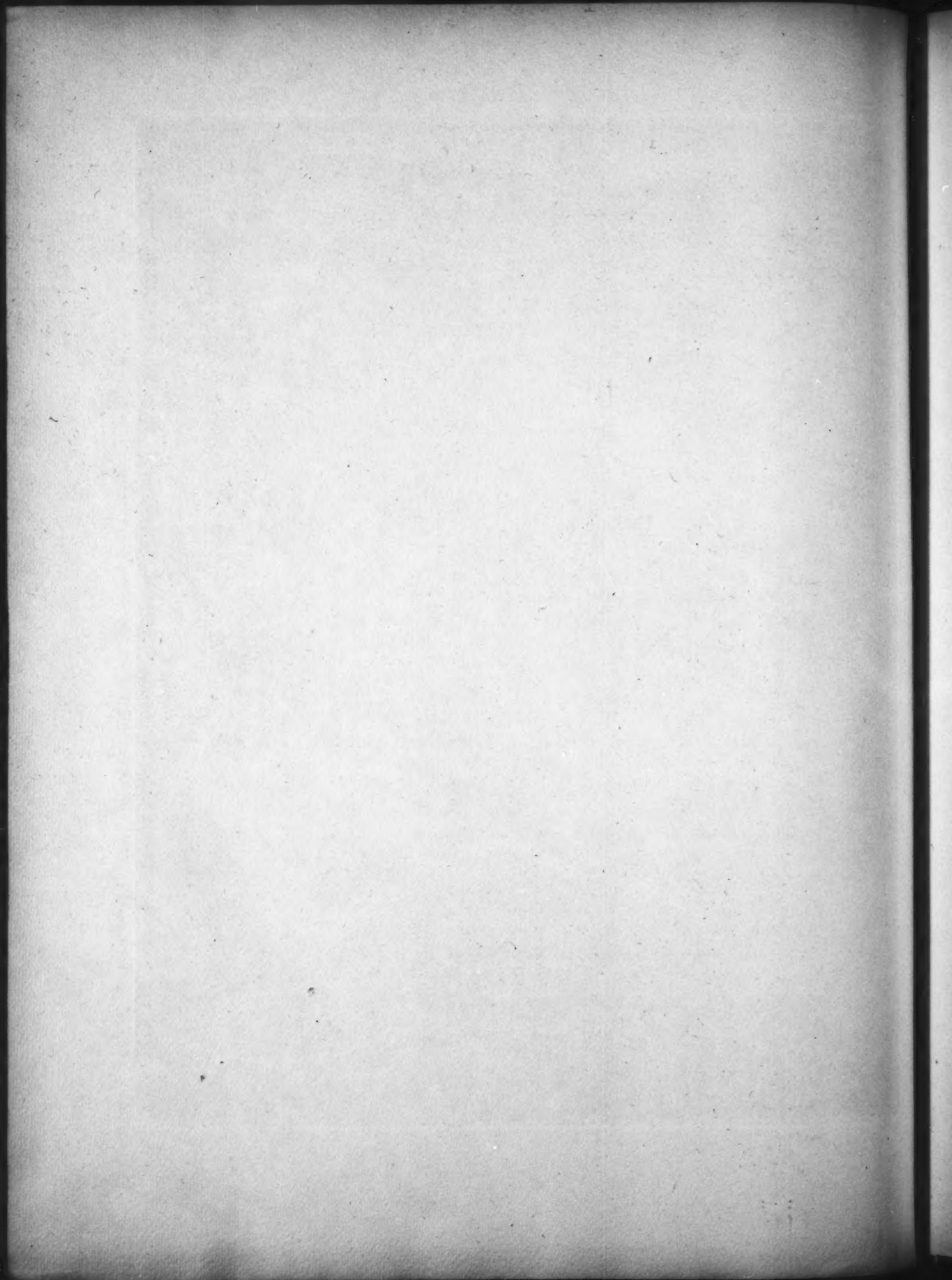
I stifled a sigh under cover of blowing out a cloud of cigar-smoke.











This confidant's character was not quite the part I had come prepared to play—— But the naturalness of this girl, the kind of poetry that floated from her amid surroundings so opposed to anything like poetry, the originality of this sentimental confession of hers against such a background, with these men about town besides us, the soft night, the noise of the dinners and carriages and the music of the Hungarians, all contributed to make me lend a willing ear for the moment, and it was in all sincerity that I took Gladys' hand and pressed it, saying :

"I, too, am sure we shall be friends. Tell me your romance and don't be afraid. I have never made game of any one but myself——"  
"I was just twenty," began Gladys after a moment's pause. I was disappointed with this outset, as it seemed to presage a story learnt by heart, but no. Immediately I saw that her recollections were crowding so thick as to embarrass her. It was those, and no longer myself, that she saw before her, and she went on : "I was just twenty, there's many a long day between now and then—— Don't try to compliment me—— many a long day. Reckon it up, eleven times three hundred and sixty-five—— I was living in Paris, and was good, oh, so good—— I lived with my elder sister, Mabel. It is since she died that I became what I am. How we had come to Paris, the pair of us, friendless, unhappy little Creoles, little white negresses, that is another romance, the romance of my life—— My father was an English engineer who had ultimately gone to seek his fortune in Chili. There he had met my mother, a native of Havana—— You see there is not much black blood under these nails," and she made what seemed like the stone of a ring gleam in the light of my cigar; "but there is some, all the same. After many ups and downs, we lost everything, our parents died, and we found our way here to make good a claim we had on the French Government—— My father had worked for you, too. Poor papa! To think that all the trouble he gave himself in his life should only have ended in his favourite daughter becoming the Gladys who is telling you this story!—— Well, we were living as I have told you, Mabel and I, and we hadn't a sou, not that——" she repeated, tapping her nail against one of her teeth, whose enamel gleamed between her lips. "All our poor



resources were exhausted. The claim? It was a hollow delusion, and we lived— how?— Nowadays, when I spend sixty thousand francs a year, for these falbalas alone—” and she patted her skirts with her hand, and stretched out her foot, “I ask myself how it was we didn’t die of hunger, and cold, and privation— Only think of it, Mabel had found a situation as assistant in a tobacco shop, on the boulevards. She wouldn’t let me take it. ‘You are too pretty,’ she had said to me; so I kept house at home. “Don’t tell Figon,” she added with a laugh, “he would cut down my allowance, if he knew that these hands of mine,” and she held them out once more, “did the cooking at home for two years. We occupied three tiny rooms in a blind alley at the back of Saint-Philippe-du-Roule, and I worked, too. What at? At the little womanly employments, that can be followed without any apprenticeship. I sewed, made dolls’ clothes, strung pearls, gave a few English lessons as well, and translated novels— I, Gladys Harvey.” She uttered these words in the same way that Louis XIV said, ‘I, the King.’ “And all through this I had time to make myself smart. I have never been so pretty as I was then, with a certain dress that I cut out and made up myself, I see it still, a mass of blue, and I remember it was spoilt in one wearing, because I had put it on to go out one Sunday afternoon in the spring. The rain caught us in the middle of the Bois de Boulogne, and we hadn’t enough in our pockets, Mabel and I, either to take a cab or seek shelter in one of the cafés there are in that direction. When I drive through that avenue in my brougham and think of my old despair, believe me, I regret that good wretchedness and the snug little dinners the pair of us used to have together on Sundays. Every other week Mabel had a day’s holiday, and then there was a feast in our little dining-room fit for a king! Two straw chairs, a deal table which we covered with a napkin, and both of us would fall to talking long and softly, delighted to feel ourselves one so close to the other in this big city whose roar, as we listened to it, reminded us of the sound of the sea, over there, in our own country—you see, there was nothing left to us of that but sad memories.

“Yes, those were happy hours, but of too rare occurrence. I was

left too much alone. That was my ruin, and then, mark you, with all my pet little tricks of making game of everything, there is no more dreamy creature than myself—or a greater devotee of the 'open your mouth and shut your eyes' creed. I have always had a little verdant corner in my heart, and in that verdant corner a daisy that I have spent hours in picking to pieces, like the children, you know, 'He loves me, a little, fondly, not at all.' Ah well! Jacques Molan was my first daisy—— It was in this way. I told you I sometimes translated English novels. This task-work had brought me into connection with a lending library in the Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré, whence I must have taken out quite three hundred volumes of the Tauchnitz collection. What a lot of stories I have devoured in which people take tea in every chapter, where there is an old gentleman who is always making the same joke with the same trick of physiognomy, where the lass and lad get married in the end, after having adored each other in a genteel and seemly fashion through three volumes! And all this I swallowed down like the slices of toast I buttered myself, after the example of my heroines, for breakfast. You can imagine what effect was bound to be wrought on a poor little sentimental English girl, who had never so much as opened a French book, by the reading of the *Cœur Brisé* we were talking about just now. Why did I ask for this novel rather than another? Because of its title, perhaps, and then, I am a fatalist. It was written that this should be my first piece of folly. For it was really a piece of folly, the reading of this book. I began it at two in the afternoon, on coming in from my little errands. By nightfall I was still at it, having forgotten all about dinner, and the tidying up of the rooms, and my being Mabel's sister, the daughter of poor Harvey the inventor, and all the rest of it. I had become merged in the characters of the book. You remember the letter the deserted woman writes before her death : *My beauty has faded while I have been weeping for you, without your having taken pity either on it or me, my sweet tormentor.* Often and often have I read and re-read that letter till the tears came! Now that I know what life is and understand what went on within me at that time, I cannot better describe how completely I was then thrown off my



balance than by saying that the book gave me an electric shock, as I have seen other women experience it from the tone of a voice, from a look—— You smile. Ah! you writers, vain as you are, will never be vain enough! If you only knew what one of your books may become for a child of twenty, who has never really lived and who loves you through the medium of your phrases. Yes, who loves you—— But how are you to believe it? There are so many busybodies or liars who act that passion for your benefit, only to get your autograph or to be able to boast of your acquaintance——”

“Poor scribblers!” I interrupted, “why, there is only one sort of woman who enters into epistolary relations with an author. This Jacques of yours and I were both very proud once upon a time of a mysterious fair one with whom we were in regular correspondence—— What a sell when we shewed each other our letters and discovered that it was in each case the same handwriting and the same person!——”

“There you have the reason,” resumed Gladys, “why I did not write to Jacques. I had a presentiment of what you describe. I have only one vanity, that of being a thorough woman, and of having a touch of that woman’s quickness, where the heart is concerned, which earns us the accusation of trickery when we are only a little shrewd—— But I read and revered this novel, and at each reading my interest in the author of this remarkable book grew until it became a case of veritable possession. What a delicate spirit he must have been to paint suffering as he did! Was the story of this book his own? Was he the sweet tormentor whom his victim blessed as she lay dying from his desertion? Had he been thus beloved till death, and then had a sudden repentance led him to hang this book on the cross of a dead lady-love, like a half-withered crown of roses? Or had whispered confidences, some chance packet of letters, or a diary, enabled him to light upon the sweet martyrdom of which he had made himself the chronicler? For I would not admit that the book was a work of imagination, and I pictured my novelist in secret accord with my wishes. He was, of course, young, pale with blue eyes, and just a touch of sickliness—— You laugh. How much more would you have laughed if you had seen me standing before a photographer’s



shop-window in the Rue de Rivoli, where I first saw his portrait, and I had to pass and repass two or three times before I could summon up courage to go into the shop and buy it. The portrait luckily realised the idea I had formed of it beforehand, or to such an extent as to prevent the spell under which my imagination lay from being broken. About the same time they published a life of him, with a caricature. I could have struck the man who had disfigured the features I loved as madly as I did the book. What can you expect? It is the negro blood, there is a bit of the slave in me—

“After reading the life I have mentioned, a fantastic project came into my head. I have told you that I was too much alone. I communed too much with myself, and I never gave myself but the silliest advice. The pamphlet stated that my hero lived during a part of the year at Vélizy, a hamlet near Chaville, and that there he owned the very house described in *Cœur Brisé*. I learnt, too, from the pamphlet, that he was not married. If he had been I should never have given him another thought, I give you my word of honour. I was such a piece of innocence—as the song says—that I understood nothing except that Jacques Molan could never love a poor little white negress, on the sixth floor, with her wretched twopenny-halfpenny toilets. Ah! If I were only one of those ladies he described in his book, and thinking of that, I conceived a great idea, to save up, centime by centime, franc by franc, enough to procure as pretty a dress as the fashionable ladies wore that I sometimes went to see driving through the Champs-Élysées in their carriages, and then to go and present myself to Jacques Molan, under an assumed name, as a young woman coming to ask his advice. Where such an escapade was likely to lead me I knew not. I never even asked. I was simply plucking the petals of my daisy, you see. He will love me a little, passionately, not at all. And I lingered always on the petal: ‘he will love me,’ without any thought except that this word, associated with this man, all unknown to me though he was, conveyed to my mind something infinitely sweet, pure, and tender. I should see him once, then again, and still again. I would say I was married, so that he should not seek to know my real name. Was I not

every inch the typical English girl of the novels I was translating? Still, I would tell him my Christian name. I was naively proud of its rarity as I was of my hair that fell as low as this," and she stretched out her arm its full length. "Well, it was a bit of romance about a romance of which I breathed never a word to the wise Mabel, as you may imagine, and which I brought to a successful end. How? By what prodigies of economy? By what little devices to conceal the little adornments that I had to get one by one, from the little patent leather shoes and the black silk stockings, up to the bonnet, not to speak of the dress. It took me ten months, you understand, ten months to get my little hoard together, and to disguise myself as a fine lady, ten months during which I multiplied my occupations, hunted up fresh pupils, took a bit out of my bed-time to double the amount of my translating work; in short it was one of those fits of girl's madness, which you are afterwards astonished at having been capable of. You say to yourself, 'How silly I was!' out loud, and under your breath, 'Oh, the pity of it!'"

This was so well said, and with such a pretty accent of gentle irony that I looked at this strange girl with a kind of admiration, which she did not misconstrue. She would have been no woman if she had not made a pause to enjoy the little effect she had produced. Then, slightly opening her eyelids, raising her brows and frowning with an expression of sadness, as though her heart failed her :

"It was a lovely June afternoon that I entered on my campaign," she went on. "I had waited for two weeks after every detail of my costume had been got ready, out of superstition. I persuaded myself to discover a forecast of success for my project in the blue of the sky, the green of the trees, and the clear sunlight of that day. Picture me getting out of the train at Chaville, and wending my way under the boughs, by the side of the springs, after having asked my way of a passing child. There were birds singing all along the road, flowers in the grass, and I met two couples of sweethearts who were straying under the shade of the tall trees. I had no idea whether Jacques was staying at his Vélizy house, or even where the house itself was, or whether he lived there by himself; all I knew was that I looked very pretty in



my grey dress, my light bonnet, and my little shoes, and that I should take his fancy if I met him, and I had no doubt of our meeting. You will say that I am really too much of a negress, in spite of my pale face? At that time, I believed in my luck—— my luck! Yes, I believed in it as I did in my twenty years, in my fancy of the moment, in so many other visionary things—— When I was quite a little girl, over there, in America, we lived on the Ocean shore. The sails of the fishing boats on that part of the coast were coloured red. Every morning I used to stand at my window, when I counted the number of the sails that were out at sea, and that brightly dotted here and there the blue of the waves. To each I attached some hope or other. One would stand for some present I should have in the course of the day, another for some drive I should be asked to take. To-day I have no more bright dots in my horizon than there are red-coloured sails in that sky. They have all gone out. But on that fine summer afternoon, as I walked through the wood at Chaville, the one that danced before my eyes was so radiant! And all the while I hoped, I was so dreadfully afraid! A foolish timidity, as foolish as my whole adventure, made my legs give way under me. I was not sure, when once I had reached my destination, of being able to find a single one of the phrases I had got ready for my hero's benefit! I went on, however, until I caught a glimpse at the end of an alley of the little belfry of a church and roofs covered with tiles. It was Vélizy. A man going by pointed out M. Jacques Molan's house to me—I was there——

"I don't know if I shall live to be really an old woman, and I have no wish to. Gladys Harvey a box-keeper in some theatre, or Gladys Harvey with a small income in the midst of her cats and dogs, in a flannel dressing-gown, or Gladys Harvey playing at the pious great lady in some country house, none of these prospects has any attraction for me. Women like me ought to die young. I consider that to be part of our profession, as it is to know how to dress well and to joke with a heart full of grief. But at whatever age I make my exit, and even if I were fated to become as decrepit, one of these days, as the old women in the *Petits Ménages*, I am sure I shall never forget that villa, half-buried under ivy, the row of standard-roses in the front garden, and myself at the



gate, looking through the rails and not daring to ring, in my lovely dress in which I felt I was at once pretty and awkward, dainty and clumsy. The rose-trees were those he had spoken of in the famous letter in my darling novel— '*They and I, my roses and my grace, shall both of us fade, my love, without your having enjoyed our fragrance?*' and later on when she says: '*I have returned, returned to this house of ours where I am dying of the malady of regret— But I cling to this malady, for it is regret which gives shape to happiness—*' These phrases of the heroine's in *Cœur Brisé* were singing in my head as I stood there, scarce drawing breath, and beside myself with emotion. What was going to befall my beautiful dream? What would he say to me, the man to whom I was bringing such naïve, such tender admiration?— Well, I summoned up strength to pull the bell-wire, and a gardener soon appeared, with a big straw hat on his head— 'M. Jacques Molan?—' 'He is at Paris, and M. Alfred too,' the man answers. Alfred who? Some friend, no doubt. I continue, 'And do you think he will be back this afternoon?—' 'I don't know,' says the gardener, 'but I will go and ask Madame—' And at the door of the house I had just been gazing on as a sort of sanctuary, I see a tallish, prettyish woman, with fair hair loosely tied at the back of the head, in a white morning gown, and watering-pot in hand. The gardener speaks to her. She gives me a stare. I don't catch her words. But what difference does it make? And what is it to me that the man comes and tells me that M. Molan will be back about five o'clock— What a fool I had been! He lived with a mistress, that was all, and it was the only thing I had not anticipated. Good heavens! How I cried in the train on my way back— cried till I spoiled my dress; it was so flimsy, a mere air-bubble, like my fine romance!—"

"And you never wrote to Jacques, never tried to see him again?"

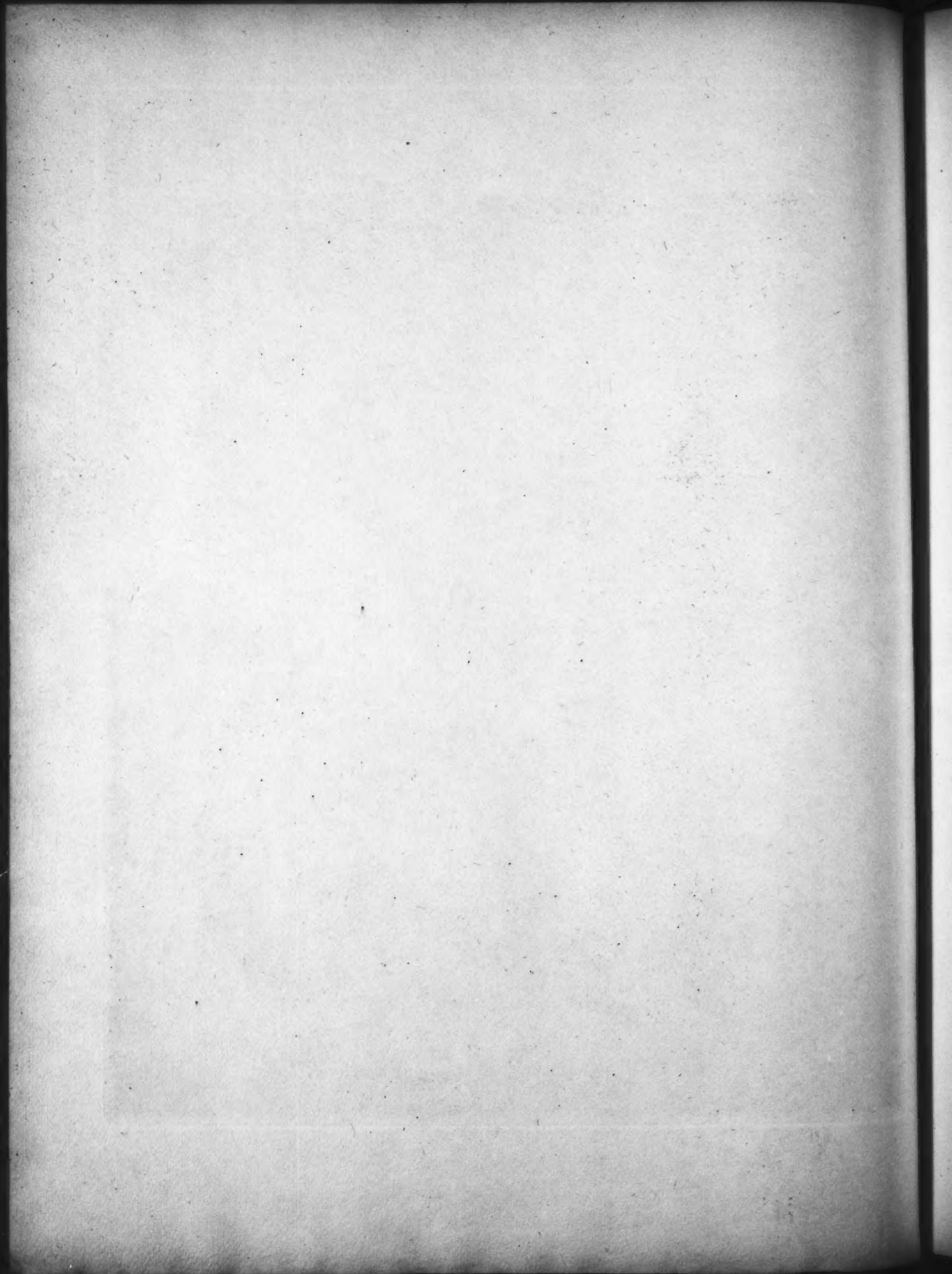
"Never," she answered, "owing to the superstitious side of me that I have told you of— I had played and lost!— And then what was the use of writing to him, as he was not a free man. Ah! that woman I had had a moment's glimpse of, with her vulgar mouth and bold eyes!— No, she was not the companion I had dreamed of for











the poetic author of *Cœur Brisé*—— But as he lived with her, he must love her—how could I have thought him capable of living with a woman without loving her?—And that love was a greater barrier between us than mere distance, than our different social positions, than the difference between his glory and my poverty—— I had not much time, either, to give to bewailing my abortive romance. My sister fell seriously ill. She died. I met some one that it would have been better for me never to have known. My lot changed; I became what you know me—— Don't think that, after all the adventures of my life, I have forgotten this strange first love, which was like nothing that I have felt since. I continued to read everything that Jacques wrote. I had friends who knew him, who talked of him before me, who spoke sometimes well, sometimes ill of him. I held my tongue. I didn't even tell people my impression of his books. For him and his works, I have always had that feeling of modesty which makes one avoid uttering the name of the person one loves before any one who would not be brought to understand why one does so. Besides, what could result from a meeting between a man like him and the woman I had become? I am a bit of an artist in everything, in my reminiscences as in other matters. I was loth to spoil my poor old dream by turning it into a vulgar intrigue of gallantry. No, I have never met Jacques, and, if I have one wish in this world, it is that I never may meet him!——”

She had uttered these last words with such profound emotion that I stood silent without attempting to answer her. While we were conversing, the tables in the garden had gradually lost their diners, the Hungarian band had ceased playing, and without doubt, our friend began to find that Gladys' gaiety was lacking to the spirit of the party, for Figon appeared at the door of the terrace, with the somewhat set smile of a jealous man, unwilling to confess his jealousy.

“Am I in the way?” he asked, tapping against the glass. “I am coming directly,” said Gladys, “just another five minutes—— You hear,” she added nervously fanning herself, as applause welcomed the news brought by Figon, that we were on the point of rejoining them, “I must needs go and play my part—— But I have a great service to ask of you——”



"If it is possible, it is as good as done," said I, parodying the famous phrase, "If it is impossible——" "Don't joke," she interrupted hurriedly. "You would make me sorry for having spoken—Pardon me——" and she looked at me with a sort of coaxing submissiveness——, "but my heart is set on this—a little more than it ought to be. I told you that I was a little bit proud of my old feeling for Jacques—I shouldn't like this feeling to be altogether wasted—— Your friend has his moments of low spirits, I know, moments of the deepest melancholy. I have seen that only too clearly in his books. He has very little faith in women. He must have met some very bad one—— Well! I should like you some day—but it must be a day when he will not be minded to laugh at it—to tell him that the woman who has loved him will never tell him so herself, because she is a certain poor Gladys Harvey—— Only you must swear not to tell him my name."

"I give you my word," I answered.

"Ah! how kind you are," she said. And with a gesture of infinite grace, wherein no doubt, one could recognize the black blood that flowed in her veins, she caught hold of my hand, and before I could escape from a caress that luckily no one saw, she kissed it, and in a moment had fled from the terrace and returned to the dining-room of the restaurant, where Machault, more flushed with wine than was his wont, was standing up, with his coat off, his powerful muscles visible under his shirt sleeve, and shouting to Christine Anroux, as he pointed to a chair: "Come now, sit down and don't be afraid—fifty louis that I carry her twice following at arm's length; who will take me?"

"Never, never," cried Christine, placing the table between herself and the athlete, "he has drunk two bottles of champagne and I don't know how many glasses of *fine champagne*, I don't want my face spoiled——"

"Brandy?—— Whiskey?——" asked Toré the Anglomaniac, as he held out the two flasks to me. He was the only one who still remained at table, while Saveuse and Figon were standing looking on and laughing at the dispute between Christine and Machault.

"I'm not afraid," cried Gladys, "let me come, Christine."

She sat down on the chair by the Hercules, who planted himself

firmly on his legs, blushing prodigiously, and grasped one of the bars.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

"All right," answered Gladys.

"One, two," said the giant, and he held the chair straight out in front of him, with the lady on it, who gaily kissed her hand to us, and when he put her down again in the midst of bravos, she said to me in a low tone, with her sad smile: "You see, right enough, that you must not tell Jacques my name——"

Poor Beauty!—as she had told me one of her lovers used to call her. When I went home, somewhat disturbed by the brandy and whiskey so dear to Toré, I tried in vain to persuade myself that she had, as Christine Anroux would put it, "got me up a tree," a tree in bloom, but a precious tree of lies and mystification all the same. Her accent had been one of such sincerity, and then, the charm of naturalness there was in her, the obvious spontaneity of her gesture, look, and smile, all confirmed me in the idea that, for once, it was a case for admitting the truth of a woman's confidence—I who have spent my life in standing on my guard against the very women I had the most passionate desire to believe. To be quite frank, I found a sort of ironical charm in not being too sceptical about Gladys' story. There is for a misanthrope a peculiar pleasure in meeting with the flower of the most delicate sentiment in a loose woman, a pleasure which is just the opposite of the delight we experience in coming across a little act of baseness in a lady of haughty pretensions. It was not so much the promise made to Figon's mistress or the attraction of animosity that prompted me, when I met Jacques Molan six or seven months after the dinner in the Champs-Élysées, to tell him about the modest and romantic love of which he had been the object. I was anxious to know if Gladys had got other people to tell him the same story, whether she had not written to him, and what not?

"That's an odd thing," said Jacques to me, "I remember perfectly being at Vélizy, about 1876-77. I happened to be there with Pacaut and his mistress, Aline, a big blonde; did you never meet her? She and my servant told me about some very fashionably dressed lady who had enquired for me, one afternoon I was not at home. And so this was



the woman!—— I trust you intend to let me know her name and address," he added with a laugh; "I will be off there at once."

"I have given my word not to tell you her name," I answered, shaking my head. What Jacques had just told me, bearing witness to Gladys' truthfulness, had given the girl such a last touch of interest in my eyes, that I should have deemed myself the basest of men had I betrayed her confidence.

"You wont blab," he went on, "so you actually imagine it is for any other reason than to get me to visit her that she told you this pretty bit of romance! Look here, when Goncourt has founded his Academy, I will get you awarded the *Grand Prix Gobeur*, if there is one."

This wretched pun was all that was suggested to him by the sweet, sad story I had conveyed to him. Then he began forthwith to tell me about his latest intrigue with a rich woman of title. Poor Beauty!—or poor dupe— But, even if she had been playing a part, I would say all the same : Poor Beauty!

PAUL BOURGET.







## ALBERT BESNARD AND HIS WORK



That an artist's surest passport to public favour is the mediocrity of his art, has become rather a truism than a paradox.

There have been, of course, the exceptions which prove the rule. But, in general, popular suffrage may be defined as a tacit expression of grat-

itude to the "good easy man" who gives, asking little in return; who amiably refrains from laying too severe a strain upon our faculties; who is content to flatter the eye or the ear in a pleasant, obvious fashion, to lightly tickle the intellectual palate; who invites the most meagrely equipped

among us to be his critics, and whose facile mysteries ask neither toil, nor study, nor initiation.

What more attractive quality, whether in picture, statue, engraving, public building, literary creation or musical composition, than a well marked affinity with recognized types? Works that follow respectfully in the wake of such as have received their *imprimatur* at the hands of posterity, and of Baedeker and Joanne, save us a world of trouble. Our judgment is a foregone conclusion. We are secured against the possibility of embarrassing mistakes. The proper forms of approval have been, as it were, stereotyped for us. We have nothing to do but to repeat them gracefully, and discussion on art may thus be made a piquant accompaniment to flirtation, or a polite cloak for wandering thoughts.

In this age of ours, when ingenuity exhausts itself in efforts to do away with the small inconveniences of life, and to forestall its most trivial demands, it is surprising that no critic should have been inspired to publish, for the use of society, an art manual in question and answer form, dealing with æsthetics on strictly orthodox lines, and specially adapted to the needs of fashionable vacuity. Such a little book would, as the advertisements say, meet a long-felt want.

Is it because of their hatred for mediocrity that innovators have met with a specially ill-humoured reception in France? I know not—but it is a fact that by us they are held in peculiar abhorrence. In the first place, their offences against good breeding are cast in their teeth. The intruders talk loudly, shew an impertinent fervour, trample on accepted theories, elbow themselves into the places belonging by right of tenure to venerable nonentities, and tread upon every one's toes alike. Their crusade provokes first amazement, then boredom, impatience, irritation, and finally exasperation.

There is no more curious spectacle than that of the average *bourgeois*, rudely awakened from his normal smug and slumberous calm. I have not yet counted so many winters as M. Chevreul, but I have been witness to such a sight often enough, and to one still more odious and unwholesome; to the sight of folly belabouring talent, of stupidity dragging genius through the mire.

A crown of rotten apples not unfrequently precedes the laurels laid upon the brows—or the tombs—of our great men. They have to stand in the pillory before they are admitted to Walhalla.

Albert Besnard has enjoyed the supreme but unenviable distinction of having been attacked by the public with frantic violence. The Philistines had long held no such jubilee. They concocted venomous criticism, they revived obsolete forms of insult, they rubbed up rusty invective, they invented virgin calumnies, and elaborated scientific modes of attack. They called to their aid the weapon no skill can parry, a cruel and murderous laughter.

The barbed sallies which greeted the artist's contribution to the "Aquarellistes," three or four years ago, still ring in my ears. I stood apart, a nervous spectator of the fun that waxed fast and furious round my old friend's work, and as I caught jest and pun and would-be-biting wit, I took comfort by passing in review certain famous verdicts of the crowd in our own time.

I remembered that Delacroix's vigorous brush had been likened to a drunken broom; that *Tannhäuser* had been strangled at birth by an idiotic intrigue; that *Madame Bovary* had been dragged into the *Cour d'Assises*; that *Les Troyens* had succumbed to ridicule; that *Henriette Maréchal* had been hissed, and *L'Arlésienne* yawned off the stage; that *L'Assommoir* had been pelted with filth, and *Les Corbeaux* drowned in a general outcry. I remembered how Baudelaire had been gibbeted as unclean, how Millet had lived desolate and poverty-stricken, how Rodin had been arraigned and all but sentenced. I ran over a long list of such names as Courbet, Ribot, Puvis de Chavannes, Whistler, Cazin, Degas, Manet, Fantin-Latour, and many more; men who have been ridiculed, scouted, reviled, treated as pariahs, granted a little space in a gallery of rejected canvases, and held up as laughing-stocks to an ignorant mob. As in a mournful nightmare, I saw this martyrdom of the great at the hands of the small, and I understood why the young artist had been a mark for spite and ignorant contempt.

Besnard's career has been marked by sundry abrupt transitions, by violent departures which are difficult to account for till we bring a knowledge of



the complex temperament of the man to bear upon our analysis of the artist.

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The father of Albert Besnard was a pupil of Ingres, and one of those clever amateurs one sometimes meets in studios; but an amateur, and no more. He died young, and left to his wife the thorny task of bringing up their only son.

I have a vivid recollection of my friend's mother. I can see her still in the ground-floor of the Rue de l'Abbaye where I first made her acquaintance. Her surroundings shewed a curious blending of the Philistine with the Bohemian. The furniture was of mahogany, covered with crimson velvet; on the chimney-piece was ranged a set of bronzes; a china jardinière stood in the window; on an old-fashioned grand piano were some scattered drawings, and in an open work-box, bereft of its bobbins, ends of pencil, stumps of charcoal and tubes of colour, were jumbled together with pieces of india-rubber and stale bread-crumbs. The walls were adorned with cheap plaster casts, sketches, and copies from the Louvre; the room held few trifles, and no bric-à-brac. The ashes of an extinguished fire had been left in the grate, a handful of dead flowers in a vase. On every side an indescribably "happy go lucky" air contradicted the prim propriety of the solid furniture.

In this room, that served at once for drawing-room and studio, Madame Besnard, who had been a pupil of Madame de Mirbel, and had a pretty talent in miniature, used to work, seated close to the window, through which streamed the raw light of the street. She was a tall and stately woman, very handsome, in a correct classic style that would have suggested a Juno to a disciple of Delille. But her appearance roused no mythological echoes in my mind. I was far too bashful and too deeply impressed. Yet she received me kindly, with the pleasant ease of a woman of the world, although, as I saw, with a certain reserve and a placing of herself on the defensive, as against one who might become a rival claimant for her son's affections. I felt at once that the bond of union between these two was no common one, and that to seek in any way to

loosen it would be imprudent. The mother, who seemed more like an elder sister in other respects, exercised an absolute authority over her son, an authority against which he never dreamt of rebelling even when it became most irksome.

Madame Besnard's temperament, eager, passionate, violent and fantastic, was balanced by a strain of prudent foresight that verged on calculation. Her adoration for her son caused all her aims to centre in his welfare, but in return, she demanded his whole heart, she would suffer no rival in his love.

Albert knew nothing of school life. He had the education of a girl, and was brought up in that somewhat artificial atmosphere of femininity which tends perhaps to an over-refinement of the senses, to a peculiar development of nervous sensibility.

The young man began to draw at a very early age. He worked away in the evenings, trying his hand at little pen and ink sketches, spoiling paper with the zeal of a novice. Instinct, rather than his mother's influence, guided him in his choice of a career. When he announced definitely that he must be a painter, she shed tears. The poor woman had cherished other hopes for her Albert, and his entry on a path which she herself had found to be paved with disappointments, brought about the sudden downfall of many a fair *château en Espagne*, and a dismal quenching of the Bengal fires that lighted them.

But she resigned herself to the inevitable, and sent her boy to an old friend of the family, since dead, M. Jean Brémond, a man who met with little recognition in his life-time, and who is still comparatively unknown. And yet, as I venture to say, his very remarkable decoration of the Church of La Villette is deserving of better things than the oblivion which has been its actual fate.

The master gained a powerful influence over the pupil. Youthful impressions, whether for good or evil, are hard to eradicate, and Besnard's mature works shew clear traces of his early teaching. Brémond indeed, was a man of strong character. Though a pupil of Ingres, he was an enthusiastic admirer of Delacroix, taking his stand for intellectual liberty and personal independence as against convention and formula. Under his



intelligent guidance, Besnard threw himself heart and soul into the mastering of draughtsmanship, imbibing at the same time much of his master's worship of colour and the colourists. His candid eyes were suffered to gaze on truth face to face, without any preliminary troubling of their vision by those artistic theories, which are often as sincere in intention as they are false in premise.

The catholic bent of his teaching enabled him to appreciate the beauties of the most antagonistic schools. His virgin impressionability, unwarped by study, discussion, and doubt, accepted the power of one painter, and admitted flaws in another, with a frankness impossible to the sectary. While his taste and judgment were thus being trained, he was also making steady progress in technique. From M. Brémond he learnt his method of painting in monochrome, and getting his colour by glazing.

In his seventeenth year, Besnard, urged by his mother, who thought the time had come to place her son under more rigid authority, passed into Cabanel's studio. The young man did no good in the new atmosphere. He was bewildered by the radical change of method. From Cabanel he went on to Cornu, returning after a time to Cabanel, restless, anxious, and despondent, wasting his time in futile experiments, incapable apparently of steady work, discouraged with himself, dissatisfied with others. His comrades at the *Beaux-Arts* had no very exalted idea of the talent of the "petit Besnard" as they called him. His chief characteristics—the *bizarrie* of his notions, the regularity of his life, his personal neatness, the dignified reserve of his somewhat feminine manners—excited more astonishment than sympathy. Monchablon, Guérin, Bourgeois, Benjamin Constant, Maillart and Chartran, his successful contemporaries at the École, saw nothing in the slim, quiet, correctly dressed young man, beyond a pleasant enough fellow, amiable and appreciative, indeed, though somewhat eccentric. His future as a painter made them smile.

Besnard indeed, though among them, was not of them. He was never to be seen at "Bullier" nor did he take his meals at Laffitte's or Laveur's; he was a rare visitor at the *Crémérie de Buci*, and among the loungers attracted by the Luxembourg band. He lived apart, closely guarded by his mother, who found it impossible to smother that strange maternal jealousy



which harasses so many excellent sons. To her the young man was still a child, whom she expected to ask her leave when he wished to go out in the evening, and who kissed her with inward tremors when he came home a few minutes after midnight, panic-stricken, like a very Cinderella, at the sound of the twelve solemn strokes that made the air vibrate with stern reproach.

Yielding once more to his mother, who began to feel anxious about her son's future, and to dream of official glory of the sort that is duly registered, catalogued and publicly declared to be useful to the State, Albert competed for the "Prix de Rome." This was in 1874. He set to work without enthusiasm, in much the same frame of mind as that of a captive school-boy who dreams with swelling heart, of cloudless skies, of fields spangled with poppies and corn-flowers, of clamorous birds, and velvet slopes, and sun-lit paths; in a word, of liberty and fresh air.

But he worked conscientiously, if not heartily. He curbed his imagination, trampled down his eager individuality, learnt the true principles of the Sublime by rote, and after two months of incessant toil over the "Death of Timophanes, Tyrant of Corinth," he turned out a picture bad enough to deserve the prize; and so thought the judges.

His success aroused no unfavourable comment, but a good deal of astonishment. For, with rare exceptions, it is generally understood who is to be the next "Roman" two or three years beforehand. The dignity is tacitly conferred and recognized by the future prizeman's world, from director to hall-porter, long before the actual election. But no one had ever dreamt that the "petit Besnard" had the smallest chance of the Villa Medici. And now behold him calmly walking over all their heads, without so much as a word of warning, and bearing off trophies before he had finished his noviciate. It had to be confessed that he was an extraordinary little fellow!

Time-honoured tradition had been rudely flung aside, and consternation reigned at the *Beaux-Arts*!

The laureate himself seemed greatly astonished at his success, and not immoderately gratified. An attractive portrait of a young girl, sent by him to the Salon, had just gained a medal of the third class. Attention

had been directed to the author, and commissions began to find their way to the young man's studio. He was naturally reluctant to leave Paris at such a juncture, and he set out for Italy in no very jubilant mood

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Besnard's sojourn at the Villa Medici was full of painful disillusionments. The ideas he found obtaining in the lay monastery were puerile and antiquated; petty hatreds, narrow prejudices, underlay all discussion; the conversation was like the trivial babble of a provincial clique. The students, who had started from home fresh in mind and light of heart, became factious and irritable. They seemed to shrink and dwindle morally, poisoned by that spiritual malaria which only the finest natures can defy.

The young man's relations with the Director of the Academy added to his discomfort. M. Lenepveu seemed to divine from the first that he was sheltering an enemy in the fold, and he was at little pains to conceal his want of sympathy with the incendiary young "Grand Prix."

At the close of his durance—December 29, 1879—Besnard quitted Rome, contrary to the usual practice, which is to defer departure till the following April. His haste to be gone was a further offence to the rulers of the Academy, who long kept up a childish grudge against the artist on this score.

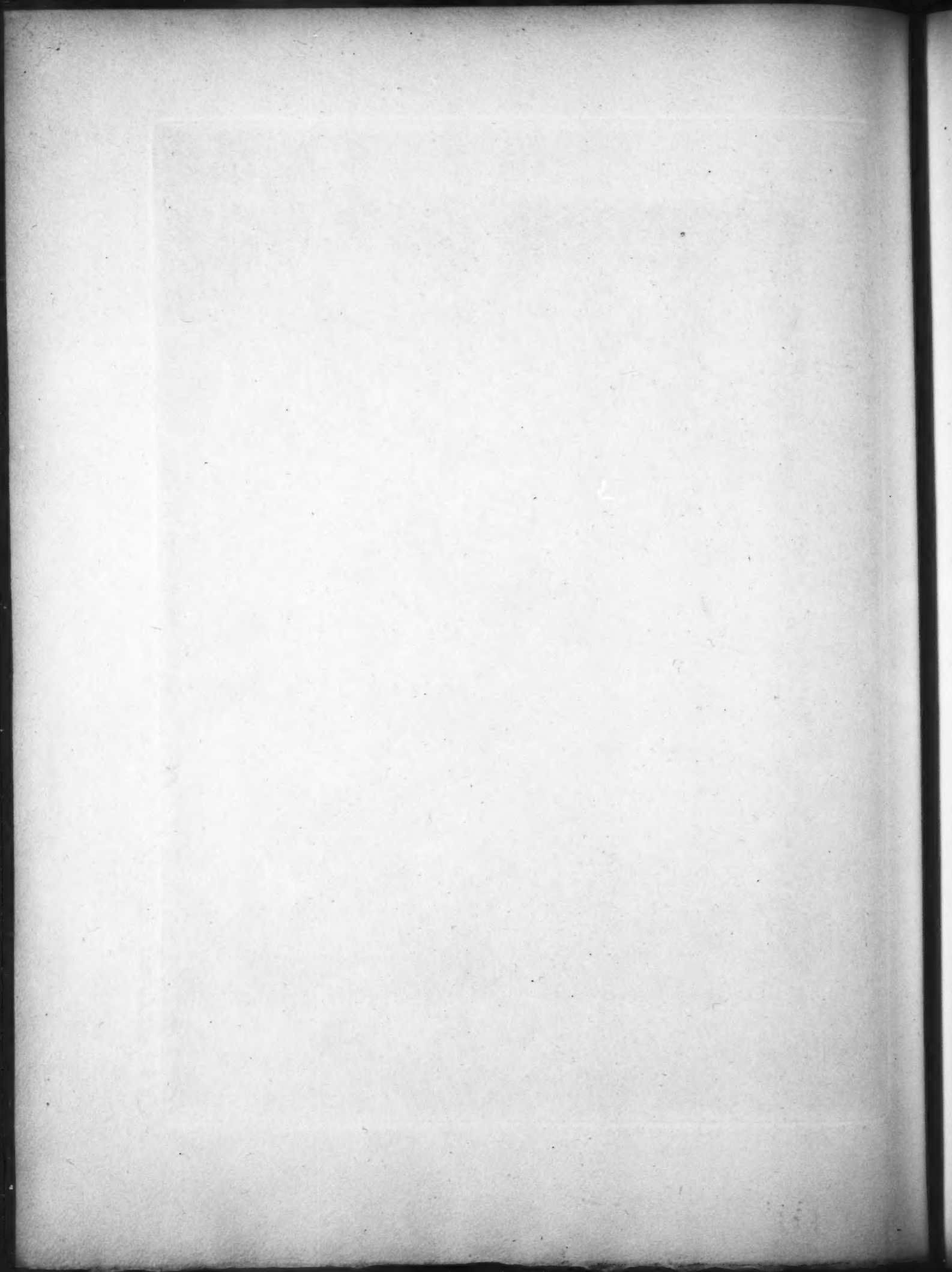
I may add that their resentment was unreasonable enough. Besnard's impatience was very excusable. His mother lay ill at Lyons of the disease that proved fatal a few months later, and a bride was awaiting his return. His marriage with the daughter of the sculptor Dubray, whom he had met in 1875 at Rome, had long been arranged to take place immediately on the completion of his term at the Academy. A pretty little idyll, to which Besnard still refers as "the greatest joy of my life," had been lived through by the young people in those Roman days, and they had solemnly pledged themselves to add the epilogue as soon as Albert should have emptied the cup of delights offered by the Government to its *protégés* at the Villa Medici.













All who have studied Besnard's works must be familiar with his young wife's features. The brilliantly beautiful head has a strong character of its own, curiously un-Parisian in the fashionable sense of the word. We meet with it again and again, in pastel drawings, in decorative paintings, in water-colours and in oils.

Madame Besnard is herself a remarkable artistic personality. She has a future before her as a sculptor, or I am much mistaken. Her influence over her husband must have been very great. I affirm nothing, for in this purely personal estimate I confine myself to generalities. Hypothesis, current opinion, obvious tendencies form the very commonplace substructure of my analysis. I lost sight of my old friend during his sojourn in Italy and subsequent visit to England, and have no more precise grounds for my judgment on this head than any other of the artist's acquaintance. And the community of ideas between the pair is now so complete, that it is difficult to make a separate study of either intellect or so to reduce them to component parts as to assign dominant traits to each. But no one can have noted the energy, the decision, the intellectual audacity of the young woman—her determination to take nothing on trust, her contempt for venerable fetishes, the almost stubborn vigour of her opinions—no one can have noted these qualities, and have marked, too, the obvious development of Besnard's character from 1879 onwards, without feeling what the moulding force may have been—a force perhaps latent and half-unconscious, but none the less real and potent.

However this may be, the painter's return to Paris was marked by a bold advance on former achievements.

The pictures he sent from the Roman Villa were, it must be confessed, all more or less steeped in the proverbial triviality of works which have that origin. They give one the impression of sign-boards for calligraphists. In "The Source," a black picture without atmosphere, and with no human interest, there was nothing but the preoccupation of the criticaster, dawdling over his written page and indulging in a puerile hunt for phrases. A year later in his "St. Benedict resuscitating a Child" we found a lisping desire for sincerity. The painting was still soft and woolly, but it was better seen as a whole, and more clearly felt. It

was followed by a vast sketch, representing the "Entry of Francis I into Bologna after Marignano," which displayed some real qualities of imagination, insight, and organizing skill, under its crust of allegory and academical extravagance.

The last year shewed an abrupt change of vision. The work is the tentative essay of a mind conscious of past failures, in revolt against authority, but as yet without any definite aspiration or acknowledged goal.

"After the Defeat" teems both with faults and qualities; it is loose, impetuous, unequal, passionate, romantic, over-literary. It is, in fact, a faithful reflex of the pensioner's own perplexed and troubled mind.

What change was this crisis to bring about? What manner of man was the artist to become? A Robert-Fleury turned philosopher and colourist? Or a dreamy Laurens, more poet than historian, more mystic than archæologist?

Besnard himself knew less about the matter than any one.

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Returning to France he soon regained his footing. He took a calm survey of what art had accomplished during his absence, and again he felt the agony, even the despair, of doubt. Bastien-Lepage was compelling the most unwilling admiration; Gervex was winning his first successes; Cazin was painting his scenes of tender melancholy; Roll, the violently energetic Roll, was shouldering his way triumphantly to the front; Degas was beginning to be noticed, and the bewildered public no longer dared to laugh at Manet, whom the red rosette had suddenly endowed with talent. A whole mob of landscape-painters, united in their love for nature, was enlarging the breach opened by Courbet and Harpignies. They would have nothing to do with ideal landscapes. They refused to paint Rusticity in a wig. They addressed her with the familiarity of a lover, kissing her lips, disturbing her coiffure, seeking the joys of intimacy, and demanding no preparation, no pose of any sort, to honour the interview. With them, classical divinities or antique architecture had come to be impertinent intruders, thrusting in between willing mistress and

passionate adorer. The cry of revolt was in the air. The seed of the new ideas was lifting and bursting the hardened surface of the soil. The trumpets were sounding for the attack from one end to the other of the line, and strong and weak were advancing under the stimulus they gave. The annual Salons took on a new aspect; Art threw off its long bondage and became at once human and national. Men began to cry out for fresher wares, and set to work, with a zeal proportionate to their long endurance, to cart off the classic rubbish that had so long poured down from the Capitol. The brilliant Renaissance of French art is fresh in our remembrance; I need not dwell upon its features here.

Besnard's early education had made him curiously tolerant of creeds diametrically opposed to his own. His faculty of assimilation, his fine intelligence, his nervous impressionability, all disposed him to a deep interest in the new movement. Not the least of its attractions to him was its element of strong reaction against the system under which he had been suffering. His adhesion to the new gospel was all the more easy, in that there was little in his actual relations to bind him to other traditions. His contemporaries, who had looked in vain for the student's customary advance in the works he had sent from Rome, treated him with scarcely disguised pity as a hopeless failure. The Institute, on the other hand, looked askance and condemned the unpromising pupil to a sort of official quarantine. What was to be hoped from this rebel, whose talent, such as it was, showed so little signs of fruition? His very facility seemed to give evidence of nothing but a deplorable lack of ballast. His union with the Academic ideal had been a mere marriage of convenience. Such a contract had in it nothing binding; it had been strictly provisional.

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The breach was made without any sort of explosion. Madame Besnard had received several commissions for busts in London. The young couple set off to England, and settled there for two years. During his stay on the other side of the Channel, Besnard painted among other portraits, those of Lord Wolseley, Sir Bartle Frere, Admiral Sir Edmund Commerell,



and General Sir Henry Green. Nothing could be less in harmony with Academic tradition than these portraits. They have little indeed in common with the finished insipidities that are sure beforehand of their Salon medals. In these pictures, we see that the painter's first aim was life and individuality. Their excellence lies in the power with which they suggest the sitter's character. These, we feel are real Englishmen, not the first people he met in the street.

Besnard made good use of his time among our neighbours. He found much to delight him in English painting. "Over there," he said to me, "talent perhaps is rarer than here, but if we compare the two peoples, we shall find it difficult to name any Frenchman to take rank beside a few of the best English painters. The English have a precious gift in their imagination, which when it escapes sentimentality, is higher, nobler, more passionate, and passion-stirring than ours. In the strict sense of the word, their colourists are more of painters than we are. They *draw* with colour."

The Besnards' stay in London was broken by several short visits to Paris, where the pair lingered among the pictures of the Impressionists. From these they came away, their eyes full of brilliant visions, of unmitigated sunlight, magnetised, as it were, by an aggressive sincerity, by an audacity that although sometimes awkward was always honest. Fascinated by all this modernity, the wife fanned the flame of her husband's enthusiasm, and day by day the thirst for truth grew in them both. In London the young people lived in great retirement. They went out little, and received not at all. Their days consequently were not broken up by trivial visits, unprofitable conversations, the thousand and one distractions of society. Nothing interrupted the work, the sometimes painful effort which was taking place in the mind of the artist, and led at last to the full blossom of one of the most personal talents of the century.

For personality is, in fact, the master quality of Besnard, the characteristic feature of his work.

Of course I do not pretend that the young master was created full-grown and complete, that he leapt into the world like Pallas from the brain of Zeus. In Art, spontaneous generation scarcely exists. Every man

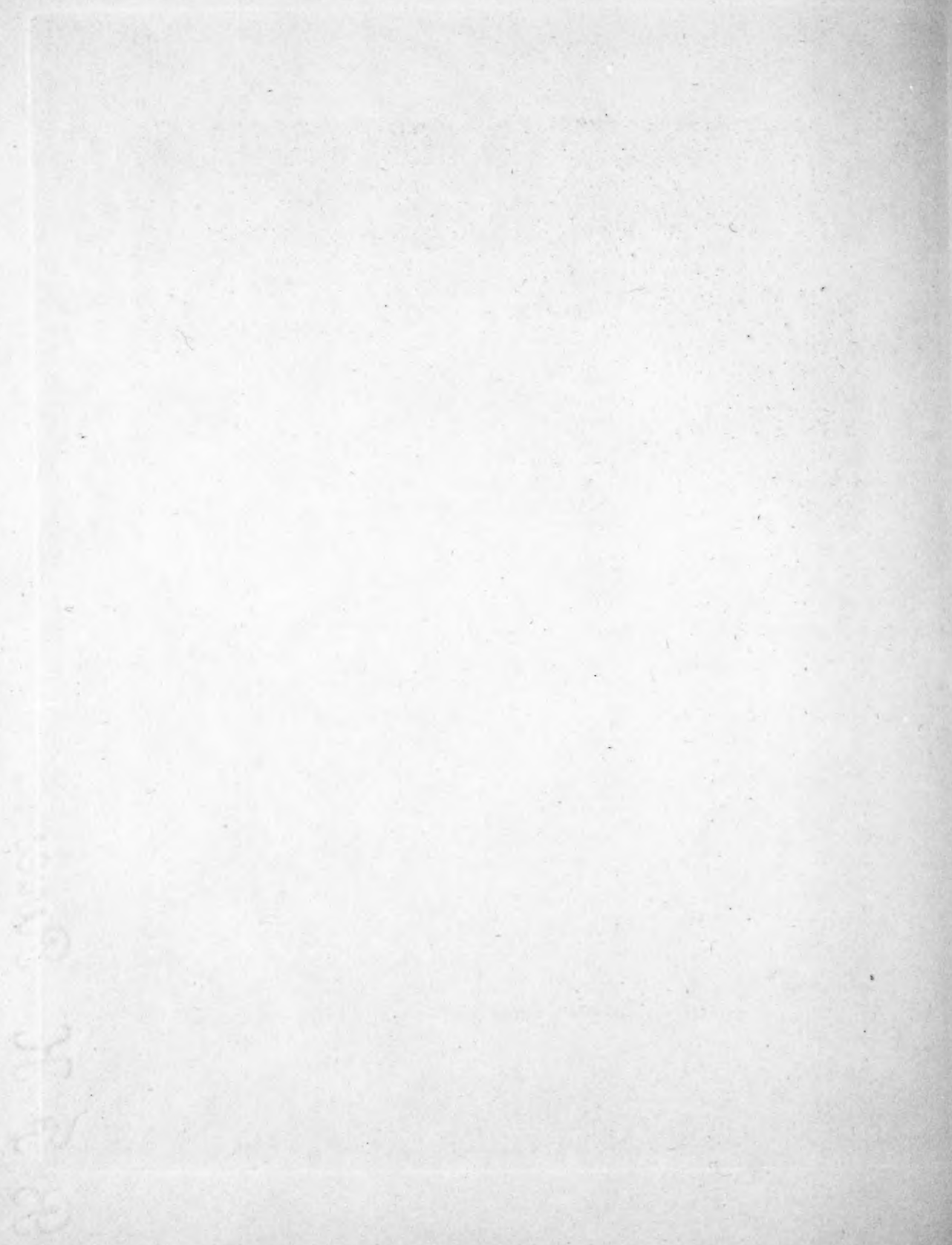








Reynolds



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is the son of some one. It is impossible, as yet, to trace the pedigree of genius, to follow in this mysterious gestation, the mechanism which gives, for instance, a writer to a painter for his intellectual father, a poet to an architect, a musician to a sculptor. The most sublime intellects are sometimes the product of a strain that has come one knows not whence, from distant and unsympathetic countries and foreign races.

And yet, what does it matter? The accidents of the cause are lost in the splendour of the final effect.

Besnard then, had his forerunners. He has tendencies in common with Degas, with Roll, with De Nittis, with Claude Monet, with Puvis de Chavannes, painters whose execution and immediate outlook upon things are diametrically opposed to his own, and that in spite of a certain affinity in their fundamental ideas.

Thus, he paints in high tones, he insists upon the open air, he renders Nature as she is, and, refusing on the one hand to disguise her with sentimentality, on the other to emphasize her prose, he seeks for style exclusively in the reverent interpretation of truth. By his choice of subject, by the arrangement of his figures, by the eccentricity of his conceptions, by the audacity of his ideas and the stubborn individuality of his temperament, he is divided completely from all that we include under the word academic.

Does it follow from this that Besnard is an Impressionist?

Were it absolutely necessary to sacrifice to the fashion which divides all the world into regiments, which gives to each man a flag to carry, and to each new comer a motto to enforce, it would not be easy to answer the question. But to me, I confess, artistic classifications seem almost silly, for it is impossible to catalogue the faculties of a man, like the properties of a vegetable or a mineral. No doubt the fashion has one point in its favour. It allows the general bent of a human mind to be suggested by a word, and destroys the necessity for long explanations; but what mistakes it engenders! Here it would be quite out of place to summarize in such a way. The conclusion suggested would be both false and clumsy, and we should have great difficulty in disentangling our judgment from the wrong notion so gratuitously called up.



Besnard is a dreamer, but he is also a rebel. He cannot bend to any form of discipline, or embrace any dogmatic religion. He is not of the stuff of which sectaries or controversialists, or prophets, or popes are made. His principles might be summed up in a few lines, his æsthetic doctrine set forth in five or six clear, decisive aphorisms. Before quintessential theories he retreats. He is bored by set discussions. He believes that a fine picture is better worth attention than the profoundest or most elegant treatise on painting, and that the habit of pretentious wrangling too often hides a fatigued or sterile imagination. In a word, the author of "The Evening of Life" paints through passion. He loves his art as others love gambling, hunting, horses, tobacco, or absinthe. In his work he feels an ever-increasing pleasure, and the bitterest critiques fail to disturb his equanimity. They cannot deprive him of the joy on which he lives; they cannot take the brush from his hand or divert his mind for a moment from the end at which he aims with unswerving tenacity. One thing should here be noted, for it is rare enough in our time; and that is, that imagination drove Besnard to be a painter, and that the same quality enables him to do his work without effort and without lassitude.

His imagination revels in space, in liberty. His brush, like a magic wand submissive to his every caprice, gives substance to the ideal, sweeps aside insincerities, and opens to him the blue Paradise that glimmers through the mist of dreams.

An artist, according to Besnard, has a right to paint everything that appeals to him; he should be guided in his choice of subjects by the one consideration—how best to express his thought. Further than that he should admit no restrictions. He should rely on arrangement to justify his ideas, and the most prosaic motive may blossom into a masterpiece under the hand of genius. He cannot, therefore, understand the rigidity of certain painters, their indifference to modern ideas, their determination to work to-morrow as they do to-day and as they did yesterday. The very notion of formula is hateful to this truant. He takes a special delight in decorative painting, but I am quite sure that, were he forced to devote himself exclusively to it, he would either lose his productive power altogether or find some desperate means of breaking his bonds; at any

cost, he would slip away to other beloved themes, to rosy skies and purple horizons, to mountains folded in mist as in a garment, to villages sharply outlined against clear sky or rising vaguely through the gloom, to harvest fields surging under the summer breeze, or to forests ruddy with the rust of autumn. Then would he glide back with fresh courage to his prison-house, and setting to work once more on his mural paintings, would throw into them some of the glamour that had rejoiced him in his taste of liberty.

Such predispositions make it almost impossible to classify their owner. His canvases are so equally compounded of idealism and realism as to exasperate the champions of both schools alike. He can afford to disregard their irritation. For it is just this mingling of qualities that gives an unique savour to his work. The blending of poetry, symbolism and reverie—the subtle psychology that makes him curiously akin to Baudelaire, place a distinctive seal on Besnard's productions, a seal which is not to be paralleled in the *œuvre* of any of his peers. His method marks an important departure in modern art.

Of a truth the adjective *poncif* is not to be applied only to the breathless imitators of Raphael, David and Ingres. For many years past, a fairly numerous band of specialists in oil, who have been proclaiming on the house-tops their contempt for the things of the Academy, have earned a right to the epithet. The exhibitions overflow with sham Millets, sham Puvis, sham Monets, sham De Nittis, sham Ribots, sham Harpignies, sham Cazins, sham Montenards. No sooner did these honest tradesmen see which way the wind blew than they cleaned up their palettes and seized new brushes with a dexterity and sleight of hand which deserve, perhaps, some encouragement.

But, so far as I can see, one trick no more does duty for talent than another. The creation of a work of art is not to be accomplished by a facility in grouping peasants, workmen, beggars or life-size fashionables on canvas, nor by smartening up dreary landscapes with incongruous figures. 'Tis but changing one convention for another. And all such convention is death to art.

Besnard sighted the rock ahead; he felt that the intention of a work



of art is not sensibly affected by subjects, tendencies or even execution; he understood that individuality is the one thing needful to the artist. He declined therefore to give up his liberty by associating himself with a school that bids fair, unless it mend its ways—to set up fetish against fetish, and to become as intolerant in its kind as that from which it has so lately seceded.

In all the young artist's productions we see one ruling desire; to render nature frankly and loyally as she is; reserving to himself the right to choose the special moment, to paint her in some unfamiliar pose, to catch some fleeting suggestiveness of expression, unobserved perhaps by others than himself. Hence his pictures are full of daring attitudes, of characteristic gestures, ephemeral combinations of colour. He has mastered, perhaps more than any other French painter now alive, the secret of momentariness; the art of fixing some passing phase of life or emotion, of seizing, as it were, the supreme hour, almost the supreme instant, for transcription. To accomplish this demands no common gift. Besnard has the seeing eye to which alone the delicate gradations of nature are revealed.

But his quarrel is with vulgarity, as distinguished from modernity. His most characteristic *coup* was the introduction of modern male costume into mural painting. The public has accepted the innovation; but if we carry our memories back some eight or ten years, we shall be able to realise the extent of the revolution and the courage of its inaugurator. His rebellion against the absurd embargo forbidding a pictorial use of contemporary material has vindicated modernity, and established once for all the possibility of its close connection with fine art.

Let us not smile at the victory. It is less trivial than it seems. Besnard not only destroyed a convention at once potent and puerile; he revived the tradition of the greatest epochs in art. Phidias, in his immortal sculptures, reproduced the costumes of his day. The horsemen of the Parthenon are, if I may be pardoned the blasphemy, nothing more than Athenian jockeys. Paul Veronese, in his "Marriage in Cana," for instance, gives us merely a sumptuous banquet at which the guests are Venetian nobles in their robes of state. To say nothing of the Assyrians, the Egyptians, the Greeks and Romans, I might cite such artists

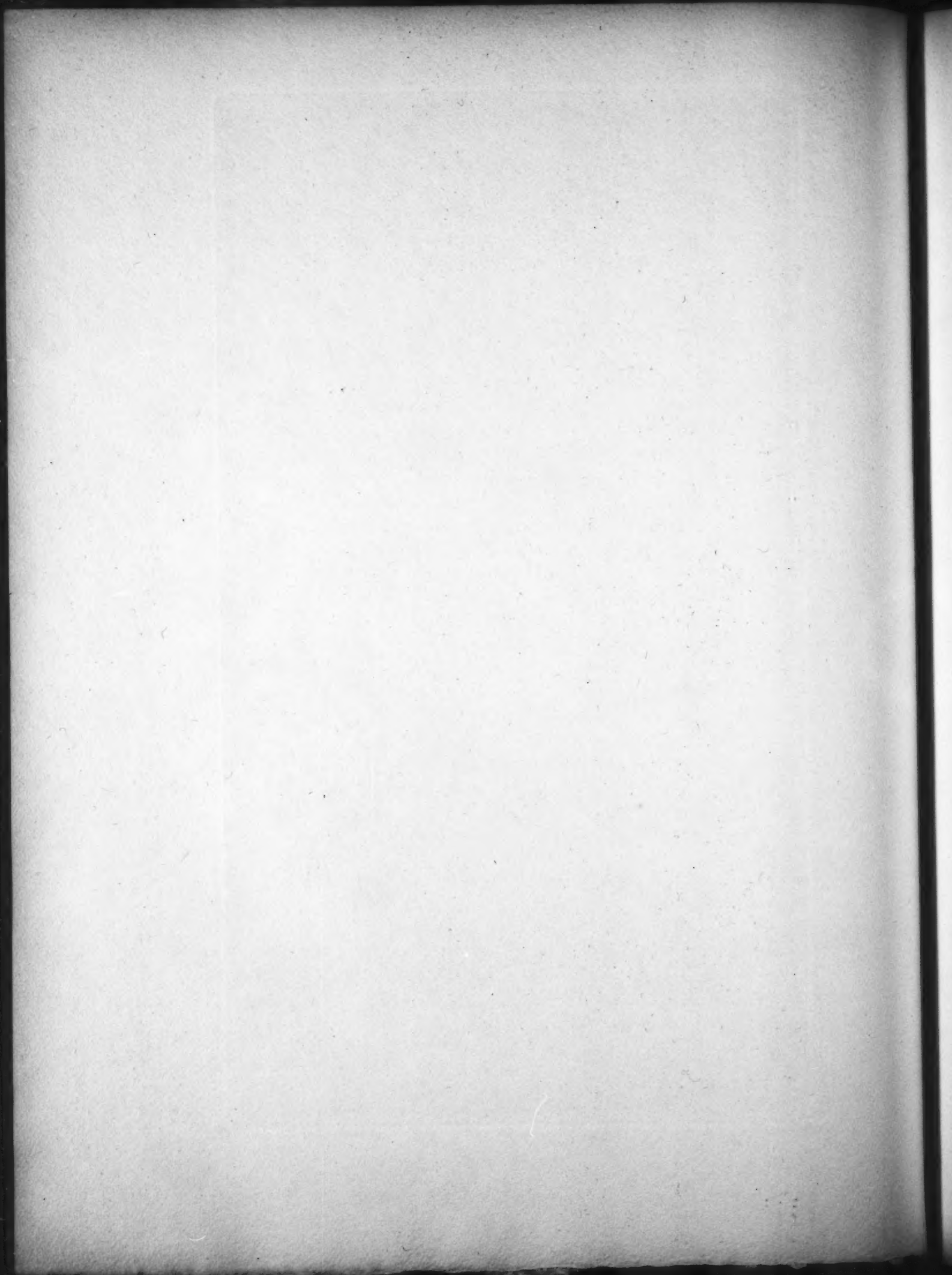












as Orcagna, Lucca della Robbia, Albrecht Dürer, Van Eyck, Antonello da Messina, Justus of Padua, Titian, Rembrandt, Velazquez, men who not only made pictorial use of the costume of their day, but gave, apparently, little thought to that of any other.

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Besnard inaugurated the revolt against mythological symbolism and classic robes in his decorative work for the *École de Pharmacie*. The time-honoured treatment of themes appropriate to such a task is familiar to us all. Quinine, in Etruscan helmet, vanquishing the monster, Fever. Ricinus, in a green peplum, fresh from his victory over the Intestines; Salycilate, crushing with a superb gesture the hydra, Rheumatism; Hunyadi-Janos pouring his healing waters from an antique urn into the outstretched goblets of young heroes and gentle maidens, who testify their gratitude by rapturous gestures. Our artist sought his subjects in the world around him. His paintings represent a physician tending a sick person, a young convalescent leaning on her mother's arm, a lesson in anatomy, students botanising in a wood, scenes which winning dignity by simplicity, deal with phases of life allied to Medicine and Pharmacy on the domestic, the professorial, the studious, and the scientific sides. Surely these are themes better fitted to impress every-day humanity than the most epic deeds and attitudes of some vague Hippocrates.

Faithful throughout to a logical conception, the painter was not content to accept the first model he came across with a sufficiently imposing physique. He held it essential to reproduce the characteristics of actual doctors, students, professors, men and women of the people, all of whom he persuaded to pose before him.

Is Besnard called upon to depict the Three Ages of Man, Youth, Maturity, and Old Age, as in the marvellous decoration of the "Mairie du premier Arrondissement," his method is the same. The arrangement of his figures gives refinement and poetic grace to his composition, and his personages move in simple and familiar landscapes, they share the occupations of the toilers we jostle every day in our streets.

Or suppose the themes suggested, to be the Pre-historic and the Modern ages. Besnard treats them in some such fashion as this. On the one hand he paints a monkey-faced man and woman, wandering in a gloomy desert, their one preoccupation the animal desire for food. On the other, a child with a book, turning its pages eagerly, in hopes of lighting upon some fresh treasure from the mint of knowledge. He stands beside his father on a raised terrace whence they look down upon a harbour thick with masts, upon factory chimneys belching out smoke, upon cranes groaning under the weight of merchandise just disgorged by a train steaming off in the background, upon a packet boat weighing anchor, and a balloon hovering in the air. In a neighbouring room a servant is occupied with household duties, and, sitting apart, in a luminous halo of grace and charm, we find a mother and her group of daughters.

We have indeed cast off the grave-clothes of classicism!

This love of truth, this fascinating individuality, breathe from all the artist touches. They confront us in his portraits, his studies, his landscapes, his genre pictures, his slightest sketches. No less striking are the signs of an almost feverish power of research, betraying at once the innovator and schismatic, the psychologist and poet.

His instinctive passion for truth has led him to abandon the strange custom adopted by portrait-painters of painting women in ball dresses in the incongruous daylight of the studio. He insists upon depicting them bathed in a flood of artificial light, quivering with the excitement of a social gathering, intoxicated with the dazzling atmosphere that has so much in common with the theatre and that modifies not only mood, but even physique, in so curious a fashion.

Besnard has put this intelligent theory into practice in two striking portraits; one, of Madame Duruy, the other and perhaps finer of the two of Madame Roger-Jourdain, the wife of my agreeable namesake. This canvas, which drove all the art critics to the verge of frenzy, renders the elegant femininity of a *Parisienne* with supreme charm. With the lightness of some dainty bird, the woman, transfigured and idealised by passion and the painter, glides into our field of vision; we breathe the perfume, we catch the subdued rustle, of her gown. On the one hand, she is bathed in the

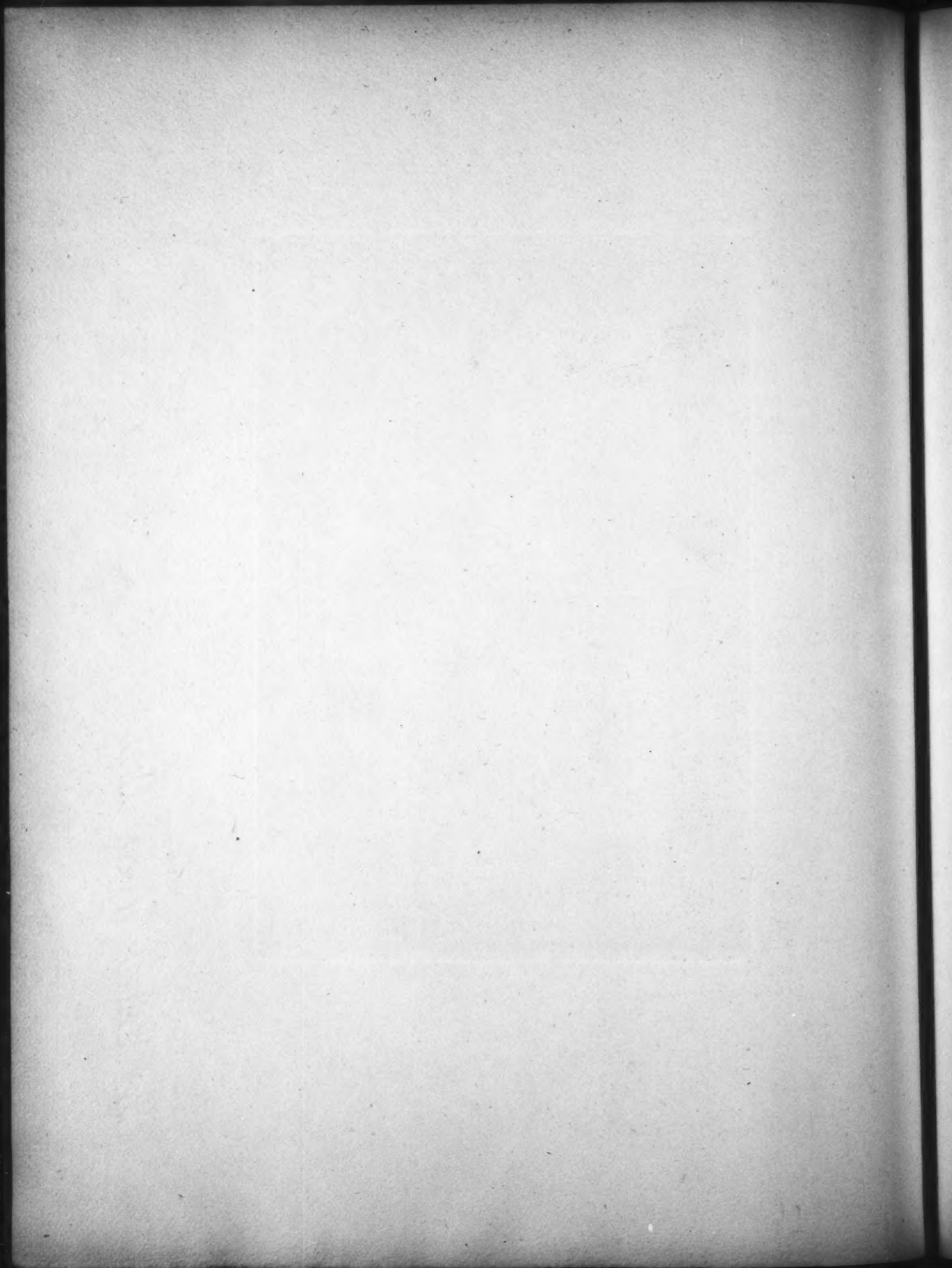












warm light of the drawing-room she leaves; on the other, her contours are caressed by those last blueish rays of fading daylight which scarcely penetrate into the verandah traversed by her charming apparition. The vision lingers with us but a moment, and yet what a poetical impression it leaves behind!

In the true experimental spirit of the young artist, Besnard has tried his hand at water-colour, at pastel, even at engraving. And in all these he has betrayed the same preoccupation with colour, style, character, in all he has shewn the same personal independence and the same respect for his art.

In his water-colours he has taken a bolder flight than any predecessor. He has broken the old moulds, he has embarked on wider seas than those with which the old practitioners were content. His drawings excel both in power of conception and in freedom of handling. He works broadly, with bold sweeps of a loaded brush, discarding the little tricks and crassly obvious methods so popular with avowed aquarellists. He models in the mass, defining form with large, fat touches, and never attempting to take difficulties in flank or to avoid the true, though difficult, line of attack.

His few attempts at illustration are a veritable feast. They are at once faithful to his author, and full of the expressive coherence of pure works of art. No less than those etchings of his which may be put beside the best plates of our school, do they bear the sign-manual of a master. As an etcher Besnard is self-taught. Without lessons or advice, almost in fact, by chance, he has taught himself to produce plates not a few of which would deserve a place of honour in any cabinet.

His technical methods, like his theories, are essentially his own. When he sets to work on a picture, he begins by making rapid sketches from the living model. These he multiplies, until he finds the exact attitude which represents the passion of the moment, or some special characteristic of the personage with whom he has to do. The pose determined, he proceeds to make a careful study, which in turn is transferred to the canvas by tracing. The next stage is to paint his figure in grisaille, modelling it as carefully as he can, but entirely from the study. The

model is only recalled at the end, to give an accent here and there, to correct exaggerations, to catch an extra touch of life. The work is finished in transparent colour, with a glaze which adds no impasto, but gives blood and life, softens silhouettes, and clothes the whole picture in the warmth and harmony for which all that Besnard does is notable.



A man with the talent of Besnard is sure to have enemies. Universal sympathy is a luxury that only mediocrity can afford. Now, I have heard more than once, that my friend's originality is nothing but a deliberate eccentricity, nothing but a fantastic trick painfully acquired and expressive of no genuine passion.

This accusation is absurd to the friends of the man against whom it is directed.

I have known Besnard from childhood, have known him well, and can meet the charge with the confidence given by long experience of his character.

Well, I affirm without hesitation that originality is the very foundation of Besnard's nature. The most profound observer might well find himself at sea before so strange a being, before a man in whom contradictory tastes, tendencies without logical correlation, sympathies without cause or consequence are united. The irregularities of his character, the want of harmony between its parts, have often scared his friends, and some among them hesitate even yet to make up their minds about him. And yet few men are more obliging, more good-natured, more agreeable to meet. His brush and pencils are always at the service of his friends, and no one who has had to ask a favour has ever found him deaf. He lavishes his talent right and left, giving time and trouble with a careless prodigality, and displaying a curious indifference to his work when finished. It is upon beginnings that he concentrates his interest. Quite lately he found that one of his important canvases—which had been rolled up and left in some damp corner—had totally perished. Such an accident would have driven some men to despair; it failed to ruffle Besnard's equanimity for a moment.

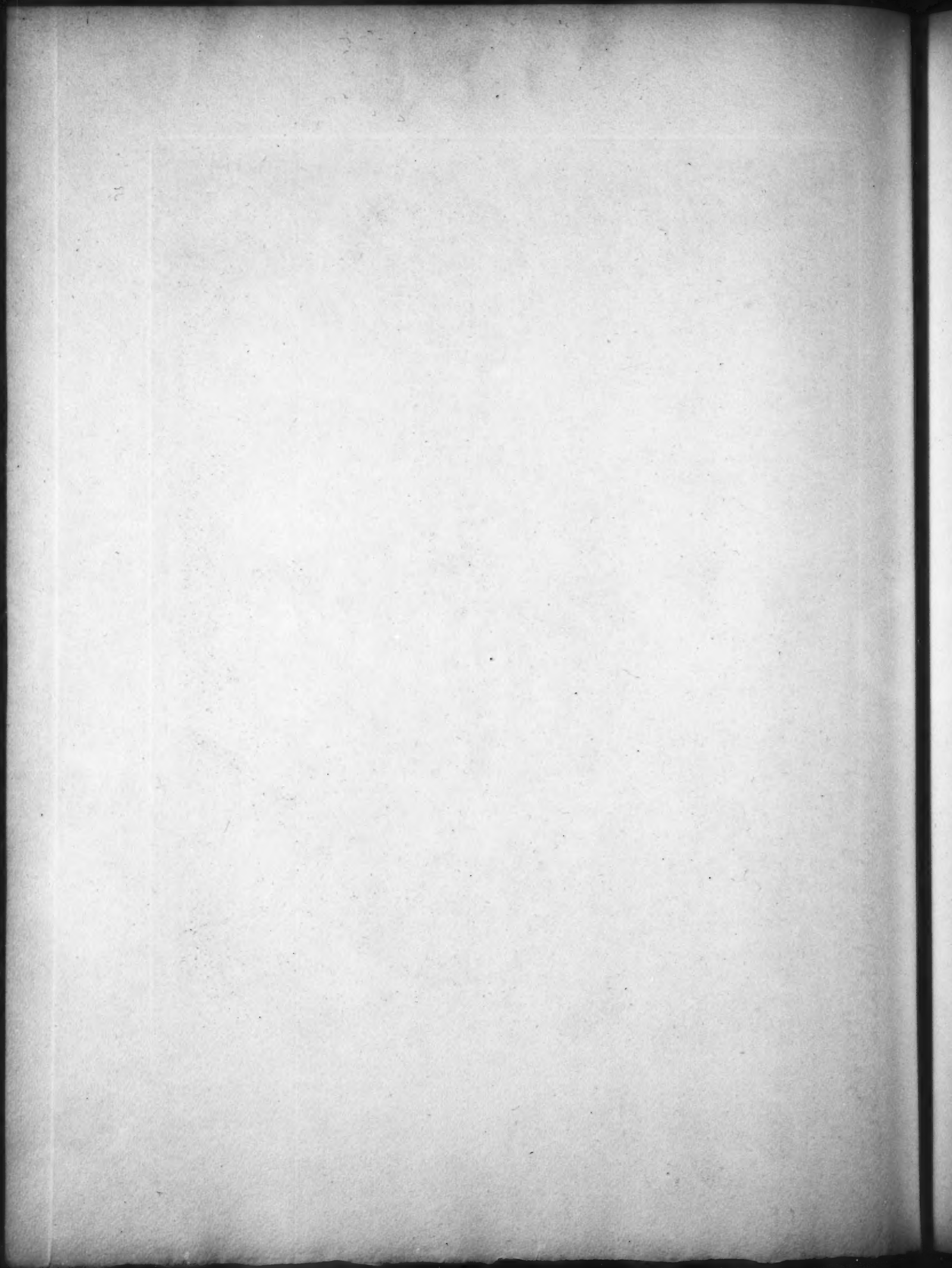












His more delicate qualities would command the good wishes of us all but for his originality (the word crops up continually in writing of Besnard), which excites surprise, distrust, a vague irritation. Even his English way of dressing angers the rather childish people who lay stress on the cut of a man's clothes. All this is silly enough, and it is unfair as well. There is nothing about him to justify the venomous jealousy of his rivals in art. He bores no one, he avoids publicity, he lives quietly at home, going little into the world, and spending his time in the Rue Guillaume Tell, between the wife and children whom he loves, with the simplicity of the grocer round the corner.

It was not always so, however. Time was when Albert had a passion for society. He had a passion, I mean, for the excitement it procured him. He loved to meet famous men and beautiful women; he appreciated the kaleidoscopic variety of a salon. Good-looking, polished in manner, agreeable to talk to, he was a success in his way. There was a strain of cool, unexpected, humorous causticity in his speech, which helped him well in his fight for the popularity that is mingled with respect. In these days—whether through satiety, or lassitude, or mere caprice, I cannot say—he accepts few invitations. He confines himself to the circle of his intimate friends, avoiding new acquaintances, and giving cold answers to those importunate people of whom he has for some time been the butt.

The dream of Besnard would be to live in a house with silently automatic doors. His table service would be of wood, the deep carpets should let no foot be heard, and the heavy hangings should arrest each external sound. The servants would be women, blonde, mute, robed in pink, and quick to obey orders conveyed by signs. The whole house would be lighted by immense uncurtained windows through which the sun should find its way unhindered, to fall upon the brilliant tapestries and expel the shadows, to make the walls vibrate with colour, to leave an impression of life and gaiety that should last even through the chills of winter. In such a place as this it would be his delight to live. Life, he says, should be passed in a reposeful silence, in bright light, in voluptuous warmth; the senseless noises of the street should be banished from one's

ears; one should make art one's second cradle, should sink into it and give up one's senses to its magical illusions.

Such a dream will raise a smile in a time like ours. It will be laughed at by our modern picture makers, among whom so many brilliant executants, so many astonishing conjurors in paint, so many unerring *virtuosi*, so many genially confident manufacturers may be numbered, but alas! so very few artists in the true sense of the word. And yet it is a dream worthy the hero of *A Rebours*. In many points, in fact, I can see an unconscious and mysterious resemblance between Besnard and M. Huysmans's creation, Des Esseintes, between the living man and the product of imagination. Their intellectual brotherhood is typical and curious. Besnard is a saner Des Esseintes, less highly strung, less irritable and less perverse. He does not kick so strongly against the vulgar hurry of existence; he is, in a word, more alive and human; but his nature is as subtle, as artistic, and almost as strange as the other.

And that is why M. Prudhomme hates Besnard and does not read *A Rebours*.

FRANTZ JOURDAIN.







## ZORAH

AN EGYPTIAN INCIDENT

Zorah was not of much account in the world. She was only one of the inferior servants at the house of Sir Reginald Headley. She helped the big negress Eminah in the kitchen, and when they went marketing every morning it was she who carried the basket—the *zembil*—which was made of the supple fibres of palm leaves. She was such a slight little thing that when the large basket was full of vegetables, fish, and fine joints of meat, nothing could be seen of her, but her pretty little feet, whose only covering was dust. All the rest of her body was bent and hidden beneath the burden so out of proportion to her size and strength.

Yet she was old enough to be marriageable, according to the custom of her native land; for she was ten years of age. Her father and mother, who were Fellahs from Ghizeh, were nearly blind, as are so many of the poor in Egypt, and they lived by begging on the road to the Pyramids. They were anxious to keep their daughter with them,

for her pitiful little face gained sympathy from the passers-by; but at length she grew tired of thus posing for money none of which ever came to her share, and made up her mind to seek work among the Europeans in Cairo. One fine day she went to the *Esbekiah* or market, and placed herself among the servants waiting there for hire. There Eminah saw her and engaged her, promising her twopence-halfpenny a week wages, her food, and one of those long blue blouses known as *galabieh*.

At first the work seemed hard; but regular meals and a comfortable home gave her strength to do it, and without losing their grace of movement her limbs grew rounder, while her tobacco-coloured skin became clearer and softer, and her large eyes lost the timid look as of a hunted creature which had never left them before.

She even came to take a coquettish pride in her appearance, plaiting her hair in thirty plaits with a silver coin at the end of each one, reddening the nails of her fingers and toes with henna, taking care not to tear her *galabieh*, and when she went out she never forgot her veils, the pale blue one or *milahieh* which covered her altogether, and the *bourkho* made of a dark blue material, which covered the lower part of her face. She only wanted gold anklets and bracelets to have all that her heart desired in the way of personal adornment. She was a pretty, graceful little thing, but no one ever noticed her except to give her an order or to scold her.

The footman, the porter, and the coachman, all three Mahometan negroes from Upper Egypt, thought of her only as a weakling on whom they could revenge themselves for the blows and indignities showered upon them by Sir Reginald.

Their master, Sir Reginald, was a handsome young fellow of barely five and twenty, with a long tawny moustache overhanging a large but well shaped mouth, changeful eyes which were in turn blue, green, or grey; cold as steel, or bright with good humour; a tall strong figure, and well developed limbs always shewn to advantage by his English-cut clothes which fitted him like a glove. He had been sent out by the English Government in 1875, to superintend the application of the laws against slavery in the Soudan. He rented a charming villa built in the Italian style in the new quarter of Ismailia.



The walls of his house were covered with flexible branches and exquisite climbing plants, Farnesian acacias with their golden plumes, mimosas with their pale yellow tufts, and starry jessamine clinging for support on their upward way to the sturdier ivy and *dolies-lablabs* the large shining leaves of which nodded in bunches on high. Rose-laurels and many-coloured dahlias edged the garden paths and were grouped in beds with balsams and chrysanthemums, while large shrubs and curious cacti grew luxuriantly beneath an old wide-spreading sycamore which covered one angle of the garden with the net-work of its evergreen branches, and was said to be as beautiful as the Virgin's tree near Cairo which, according to a local legend, once sheltered the Holy Family. Although centuries old this tree still produced bunches of those insipid, but nutritious figs which seem to spring out of the bark of the sycamore.

The view from the windows of Reginald's bedroom was obscured by the branches of this splendid tree; but he would not have it cut down on account of the pleasant shade it gave, and he also liked to hear the twittering of its multitude of feathered inhabitants.

The garden, which was of small size, was shut off by an iron railing and gate from a broad fine avenue of acacias, along which the handsome villas of the Greek and Jewish bankers of Cairo were situated.

Reginald had furnished his house with some taste, patiently searching the bazaars of *Kamsavi* and *Khan-khalilah* for bric-à-brac from Japan, India, Turkey, Arabia and the Soudan, ferreting out divers scraps of furniture from those old quarters of Cairo where artistic treasures, such as one dreams of after reading the Arabian Nights, are hidden away in the narrow shops of the covered streets, in courts concealed from the view of the chance passer-by, and in the hovels which appear to grovel at the feet of the mosques, and look so strange to an English eye. The result was perhaps incongruous in detail, but good as to general effect.

\* \* \*

One day Reginald noticed Zorah. She had been in his service for six months before this happened; but he had simply ignored her existence, not because she was an under-servant—and there were so many others



that he had no occasion to see her,—but because she was *black*, that is to say *not white*; for although he was sufficiently liberal-minded to consider himself more as a lay missionary than as a mere government functionary, yet he despised the negroes and Fellahs who swarm like ants in Lower Egypt.

Long ago and from a distance he had extended to them that fraternal pity which he felt for all who were oppressed. He was well aware that centuries of slavery, misery, and ignorance, of cruelty at the hands of overseers, and of government by the rod, had brutalised these poor wretches, who were treated by all as lower than the brutes; but he felt convinced that their regeneration was not an impossibility, and he resolved to labour in their cause when he accepted the post of protector of the Soudanese negroes. Yet, although he was a sincere philanthropist, he was one of those sensitive aristocrats who shrink from contact with the very beings whom they wish to help and to civilize, as if it were contaminating, and when he came to live in the midst of negroes and Fellahs and had constantly, even in his own house, to suffer from their idleness, their uncleanness, their aimless roguery and deceitfulness, as well as from their ingratitude and cowardice, he began to admit that he had made a mistake and came to think, as do most of the Europeans who live in Egypt, that the evil was so great and so deep-rooted that it was vain to dream of curing it.

From the time that this conviction forced itself upon him, he reserved all his activity for the cause of the immense black population of distant regions, believing that complete barbarism offered a more fruitful soil in which to sow the seeds of civilisation. Moreover, without entering into the matter as a personal question, it was his duty to fight against the practice of slavery, and he threw himself heart and soul into the struggle.

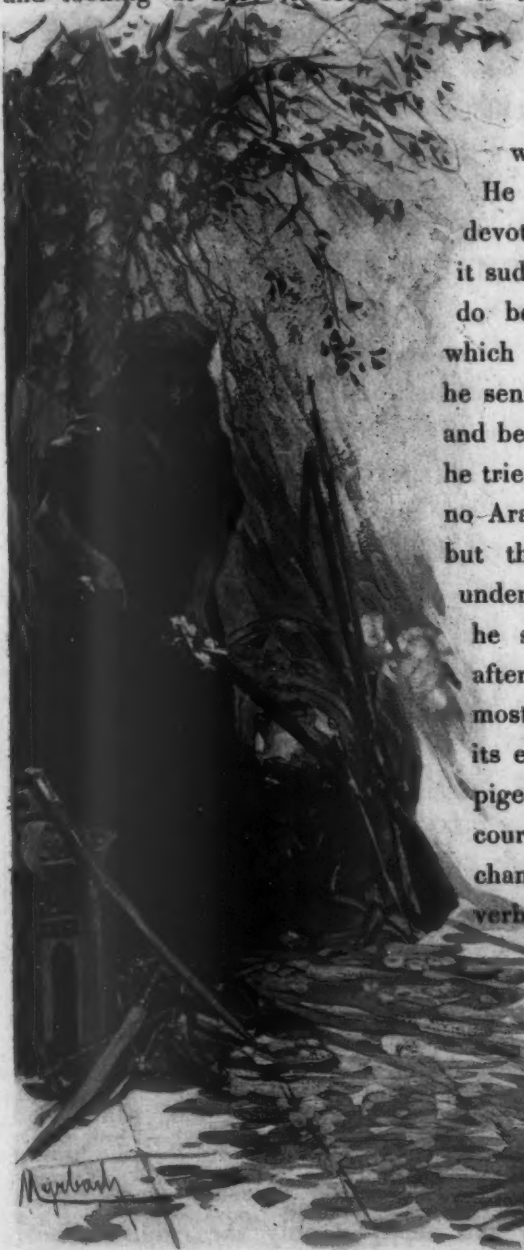
A shower of sunbeams fell through the fronds of jessamine upon the little Fellah girl, when Reginald first noticed Zorah, and his gaze was attracted solely because she formed the central figure of a very charming picture. She was standing in the midst of a heap of old Syrian arms which she was busily cleaning, and those which she had finished furbishing reflected dazzling rays of light from their polished surfaces. When

he caught sight of her, she was just leaning against the wall a buckler from which she had removed the rust of years, having carefully oiled it, and looking at her, it seemed as if the buckler reflected itself on her face, for both had the same tint of polished bronze.

Reginald looked at her, and what he saw pleased his artistic eye.

He was fond of painting, to which he devoted much of his leisure time, and it suddenly struck him that he could not do better than reproduce this subject which so unexpectedly offered itself; so he sent for his painting materials at once and began the sketch. While he worked he tried to talk with his model. He knew no Arabic, and Zorah knew no English, but they managed to make themselves understood by means of French, which he spoke well and which she spoke after the manner of her kind; for like most of her compatriots of Cairo and its environs, she had acquired a sort of pigeon French by means of daily intercourse with French servants and merchants, and she managed to supply any verbal deficiency by the use of a variety of most expressive and monkey-like gestures.

She had not much to say about herself or her relations, but she greatly amused Headley by her excessive anxiety and curiosity as to what he could possibly be going to





do with that square canvas, which she eyed uneasily, being half-afraid of it.

Her delight was immense when she recognized herself from the sketch, although as yet it only consisted of a few lines. She wanted to express her joy in the inconveniently demonstrative fashion of the daughters of the south, to kiss Reginald's feet and hands and garments, to pour forth all the words of enthusiastic gratitude and naïve admiration, which seethed in her excitable little brain; but in the face of his calm indifference she dared not thus unburden her soul, and only testified her emotion by deep-drawn sighs.

Nevertheless he understood her, although he considered it incompatible with his dignity to appear to do so. It would not do for this little negress, who was only next door to a slave, to be allowed to see that there was something in common between him and herself, or to find out that he was already interested in her and attracted by her. Besides, it occurred to him that if he were to speak to this child of nature in any way that was not hard or cold, she would be likely to venture upon familiarities which he would afterwards find it difficult to repress.

At the end of the sitting he dismissed her with a wave of the hand, and carried the sketch himself to his smoking-room which also served as a studio. She gazed after him with the pained surprise of a dog which is forbidden by its master to follow him, and then she went slowly to Eminah who was calling her.

After that every morning was passed beneath the jessamine, Zorah resuming her pose in the midst of the heap of weapons which had not been disturbed, and Headley seated on a camp-stool in front of his easel. The picture made good progress. Having now got over her first shyness, the model enlivened the sitting by singing, in the monotonous nasal chant of the Arabs, those curious Arab songs the melody of which is so simple and yet so difficult to write down—love songs of the most extravagant kind, and others of a more sprightly and humorous character. The singer herself seemed to understand but little of what she sang, and Reginald not a word, but he found a kind of charm in this humming accompaniment to his work, which redoubled the pleasure of painting; while Zorah was perfectly content and happy if only she could be near



him and feel him glance at her now and again. They had grown used to each other, and without either being aware of it, a current of sympathy had become established between them. The painter did not hurry to finish his picture, and Zorah tried to forget that the time must come when she would no longer be his model.

The crowning delight of these happy dream-like days was to gaze at the picture, which represented her as being far prettier and better-dressed than she really was. Reginald allowed her to come round from time to time and look over his broad shoulder at his work, and he was secretly much amused by her suppressed exclamations of joy and surprise while she stood by his side, her hands tightly clasped.

At night the child dreamed of the delights of the day, and of tomorrow, or waited in feverish sleeplessness for the first faint ray of dawn to enable her to run to the smoking-room and gaze once more at her master's work, admiring herself in it without fear of interruption.

One night when the work was already far advanced, Zorah could not resist a wild desire to see the picture again without waiting for daylight. She had no light, so she groped her way to the picture. She could see nothing, but feeling a passionate longing to put herself into some sort of communication with what she knew to be her image, she caressed it lovingly, passing her fingers in all directions over the wet surface of the paint. When it grew light she came again to look at the picture, but found to her despair and terror that she had spoilt all; she could hardly recognize a line on the confused surface, and, in an agony of grief and fear, she rushed from the scene of disaster and hid herself in an empty bin in the cellar, whence she could hear Reginald's angry voice when he had discovered what had happened. Her absence of course betrayed her, and all the servants joined in the search for her, delighted at the thought that the little favourite was now going to have a good beating. She was soon found and brought to Headley, who, trembling with rage, seized her roughly by one arm and swore that he would know what had induced her to do such an abominable thing. The child was so paralysed with terror that for a long time she could not utter a word, but at last she succeeded in saying : "I did not think I was doing any

harm." A sort of modesty prevented her confessing the burning desire she had felt to *touch* her portrait.

Reginald after having with difficulty restrained himself from destroying the picture, sent every one away and shut himself up in the smoking-room, where he gradually grew calmer, and at last brought himself to see that the damage was not irretrievable, and that he would be wrong to give up a work in which he was so much interested.

"It shall be for *her*," he said, turning his face towards the north.

Zorah was recalled, resumed her pose in the garden, and dried her tears; but her breast still heaved, and for hours afterwards she was shaking with sobs, without knowing whether her grief arose from regret for having spoilt what she so much admired, or for having provoked Reginald's anger, which she so greatly feared.

From that day she grew serious, melancholy, and timid like a gazelle. She trembled and closed her eyes if the painter spoke to her, and shivered if he touched her head or shoulder with his long white fingers in order to adjust her pose. Something incomprehensible was taking place in her. At first she had dreaded being sent away, and that all which had made her so happy was over; but now she had regained all that had been her delight, and yet she was not happy.

It seemed as if Reginald had forgotten the involuntary misdeed of his model, and although he did not say so much as formerly, his voice was softer when he spoke to her; yet Zorah was not satisfied, and it seemed as if a weight were on her heart. She did not know what she wanted. Something unknown and intangible troubled her, but Reginald, who was at first surprised by the change in her, was not slow to read the secret of this child, who was in truth already a woman. He was annoyed at the discovery and refused to believe in it. When he said to himself: "Why, the child is in love with me!" he inwardly exclaimed: "What nonsense!—She is ailing, or tired of posing, that is all—I must finish the picture as quickly as possible, and let her go back to the kitchen."

Yet he was none the less convinced that Zorah really loved him; and he was pleased at this, although he would not allow it even to himself. In spite of his good resolutions he worked no jot the quicker, always



persuading himself, with the best faith in the world, that still much was left to be desired in the picture. But gradually he perceived that Zorah's love for him was increasing daily, and that to send her back to Eminah would not suffice to restore to her the peace she had lost. He would have to do more than that, and something better, but what?

His friends in the English Colony would have a good laugh at his expense, he often thought to himself, if they knew how he was worrying over the troubles of such an insignificant little creature. Then they would advise him, as if it were the easiest thing in the world, either to take no notice of the matter, or to send the girl away with a present of a few pounds. But he was angry with himself for causing this child, whom he felt to be superior to her compatriots, to suffer a sorrow which was perhaps deep. He ought to have remembered that in these sunny climes a girl is a woman at the age of nine or ten; and that an Arab girl seeing no one but himself would naturally admire and love him. Of this, however, he felt sure, that if he was already to blame, he would be more so if he continued to keep her with him. He therefore thought out a sort of compromise. He would make it his business to marry her to some honest, hard-working young man (for he had now given up the idea that the Fellahs were all worthless brutes); he would give her a wedding portion, and then when she found herself well-to-do and beloved she would soon console herself. At first he was pleased with this idea, but it soon came to annoy and irritate him, and finally he grew to dislike it very much. Was this because he cared for Zorah? No, surely not. Yet he did not make any effort to find the husband he had promised himself soon to give her, and he even felt towards this unknown person who would take her away from him a sort of jealousy of which he was ashamed. Yes, he was certainly ashamed of himself and of the thoughts which now possessed him; for in his mind Zorah had grown from child to woman, and he was anything but sure of his feelings towards her. Yet he was determined not to yield to temptation, and on the strength of this firm resolution, bearing in mind that this girl would soon pass into other hands than his, he thought he might be a little more familiar with her, and talk to her a little more freely. The sittings went on



every day, and were perhaps unnecessarily prolonged, his hand touched her hair or shoulder with a lingering gentleness when he rearranged her pose, and one day, during these caresses, which were, to say the least of it, imprudent, Zorah fainted.

Both painter and model, sheltered by the shade of the sycamore, had forgotten the time, and the midday June sun was pouring its fierce rays down on Cairo, making the atmosphere stifling, and scorching the very soil. The plants in the garden drooped, not a breath of air was stirring, and the scent of the flowers seemed almost intoxicating.

Reginald, who had yielded to the soft spell of the hour, was startled from his reverie by the fall of Zorah.

He felt at once that this was his fault, and losing all self-possession when he saw the rigid form and livid hue of the girl, whom he thought dead, he raised her in his arms, crying: "What have I done?—Zorah! do you not hear me?—My little Zorah!"

She remained motionless, and he knelt down by her, supporting her with his right hand, and placing his ear against her breast which was covered only by the blue linen of her *galabieh*. Her heart beat faintly. It was only a syncope caused by the heat of the garden and by the effect of suppressed emotion.

Somewhat reassured, but too much affected to do what was necessary to restore consciousness, Reginald called a servant; but no one came, for they were all loitering in the town; then he thought that the coolness of the dining-room would perhaps restore her, and with a dozen awkward precautions, he carried her into the house.

Almost in spite of himself a thrill of pleasure passed through him as he held her light form in his arms; she seemed to him more graceful and charming than ever before. He admired her pretty mouth and white brilliant teeth, and the scent of spices and flowers which hung about her hair and gown. He laid her tenderly on a divan, and noticed with joy that her cheeks were less pale. Her eyes remained closed, her limbs motionless; but her lips moved and heralded returning consciousness.

The graceful outline of her form was shown by her thin robe, and the rays of sunlight which found their way through the thick Japanese











blinds, tinted with gold the bronze of her face, her neck, and her little bare feet. Zorah seemed to sleep, and gazing down on her, he remembered how long she had loved him, how she had trembled and throbbed as she stood before him, and the look of intense and passionate tenderness with which she had raised her large dark eyes to his. Never before had he been so affected by her presence, a wild desire seized him to kiss those quivering lips, to clasp her to him in a long embrace. Suddenly he heard a footstep in the next room; a servant had doubtless returned. Reginald felt a strange sensation of relief as though he had been roused from a nightmare in which he was about to commit a bad action.

This feeling, however, soon changed to one of anger against the idle, gossiping servants who had been absent just when he needed them most, and when the Barberino opened the door he flung himself upon him, and vented the energy of his over-excited nerves in a shower of blows on the fellow's back. The Barberino tried to exculpate himself in a sharp, screeching voice, but he received the blows with that comic insensibility common among negroes, which tires out European arms and proves the absurdity of such a method of correction.

Meanwhile Zorah opened her eyes, her recovery being hastened by the noise made by the two men. She looked about her confusedly, understanding nothing of what was passing, and then, suddenly alarmed, she slipped lightly from the divan and crept out of the room.

When Reginald paused, his hands bruised by the exertion, he saw a letter which the servant had brought. He knew it came from his sister by the Dublin postmark and large English handwriting. He blushed violently and ran upstairs to his room two steps at a time. A curious feeling of modesty at the recollection of the young girl who had written to him, prevented his even glancing at the divan where he thought Zorah was still lying. The letter was a sad, but affectionate one. His sister told him that she was miserable so far away from him, and that, since they had no longer either father or mother, they ought to live together, and she wished to come to live with him in Egypt.

Reginald could hesitate no longer; two powerful motives obliged him to fulfil at once the promise he had made to himself with regard to



Zorah; the fear that the scene he had just passed through would be repeated, and the speedy coming of a young girl whom he regarded with as much reverence as love.

He had no longer any confidence in himself—— “I will go and fetch Lucy myself,” he thought, “and while I am away things will right themselves.”

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Twelve days after he arrived in Dublin. When leaving, he had asked one of his friends, an Italian Commander named Foriere, to oblige him by taking six hundred *thalaris* (about £120) to Zorah's parents, with the understanding that they were to buy with it a brick house and fertile piece of land, a good buffalo for milking, as well as pigeons and fowls, the sale of which at the market in Cairo would help them to earn a living. They were to take back their daughter and swear not to ill-use her, until such time as, by the aid of the *Sheik-el-beled* of Ghizeh and a dowry of a hundred pounds, she should be able to make a suitable marriage.

Naturally, in accepting the commission, the Italian promised to do all that Reginald asked, and just as naturally he thought the mission an absurd one, and determined to carry it out in his own fashion. As soon as Reginald had left by the train for Alexandria, the *Commendatore* went to Ghizeh, gave the money to the father and mother, and after telling them something of the wishes of their benefactor, left them, taking no further trouble about the fulfilment of the conditions mentioned.

No sooner was he gone than the husband and wife turned to each other in the utmost astonishment :—“*El Noursrâni magnoun!*” (the Christian is mad!) they exclaimed. Then, with one accord, they hastened to bury for ever the unexpected fortune with which Reginald had intended to secure their future well-being. They both deemed it desirable to conceal their wealth from the fiscal authority if they wished to retain it, and, if necessary, to be able to deny that they had ever received the money, in case the *Noursrâni* should regain his senses and come and ask for it back again. After having hidden their treasure they returned to the life of poverty and vagabondage in the roads under the sycamores, which suited them well enough.

Foriere was quite as prompt with Zorah as he had been at Ghizeh. He gave her the hundred pounds in gold, telling her, like the bungler he was, that Reginald had had enough of her and wished her to get married as quickly as possible, to settle on the other side of the hill, and never come back to the villa.

Zorah could not believe her senses. Her lips parted with a nervous smile which showed all her teeth and made her look stupid, but her eyes were raised to his with a gaze of anxious, passionate enquiry.

She could not understand that once and for all she was cast out into the streets like a thing of no value; but she felt that she was to be separated from Reginald, she would never see him any more! Then she was seized with a terrible access of terror, fury, and despair. She threw herself on the ground, shrieking and biting the dust, rending her garments, and tearing her hair like a mad creature. After a time she rose, sprang to the gate, shook it, tried to force it open, and cried in a voice of agony to Reginald, Eminah and the others, but all in vain.

The *boab* or gate keeper called to her through the iron bars to go away, and obey the "Master;" but she did not understand and only continued to scream and make frantic efforts to open the gate. The Italian had ridden off after giving her the money. A crowd of Arabs and Fellahs collected round the excited girl, each inventing some story to explain to a new-comer what was the matter, all gesticulating and roaring in a manner peculiar to Orientals, who when they are only gossiping, sound as if they were ready to tear each other's eyes out.

During her frantic exertions some pieces of gold fell from Zorah's pocket, and this was quite enough to cause her to be accused of robbery. A *zaptieh* (a sort of Arabian policeman) was attracted by the noise and decided to intervene. He thought it his duty to arrest somebody, and seeing the child struggling and dropping golden coins, arrested her, as apparently the proper person. Followed by an ever-increasing crowd he brought her to the *Zaptieh* or prison of the European quarter. The money found upon her was sufficient to prove to the sleepy officials that she was a thief, and her rage and struggles which were followed by a sort of stupefaction were evidence enough for them that she was drunk;

so without more ado she was locked up in the court-yard where crouched groups of thieves, assassins, drunkards, and the very scum of the town.

The same night she made her escape.

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A month later, Foriere passing through Ismailia by chance during one of his rides, was not a little surprised when he thought he recognized Zorah in the dusty ragged creature crouched up against the gate of Headley's garden, like a beaten jackal.

For three days following he tried to approach her, but the moment she saw him she fled away. He was acquainted with that curious brute instinct which leads negroes and Fellahs to return to a house from which they have been driven away, actuated perhaps by the memory of past pleasures or some vague hope of future gain; but beyond this he recognized the love of Zorah for Reginald, and was annoyed at the turn affairs were taking, for he foresaw that on his return Headley would find the girl still in his way, and would think that his instructions had not been carried out, perhaps even imagining that she had not received a penny of the money; for she looked like a starving beggar.

Eminah and the door-keeper told the Italian that for a month past Zorah had never left the environs of the villa, and that neither threats nor blows availed to drive her away. They also were afraid for Reginald to see her, lest he should pity her and take her back into his service.

So Foriere and the servants united their forces against the poor child, and determined to get rid of her. One day she was allowed to enter the house, and as she had not believed what she had been told of Reginald's departure and wishes, she ran through all the rooms, breathless and eager, crying out: "*Fen rhavhage?*" (Where is my lord?)

The Italian was the only person she saw, and he, assuming a stern manner and loud hard voice, read to her a letter supposed to be from Reginald which ordered the little servant to leave the villa and never to return to it; for if she did not obey this command the *zaptieh* would take her to a convict prison in Upper Egypt, where she would be forced to pass the rest of her life. The servants were called and pretended to



attest Reginald's signature, and this time the poor child doubted them no longer. It seemed as if a blow were crushing into her brain, her heart swelled and seemed to stifle her, while her parted lips refused to utter a word— Nothing more could affect her, nothing increase the agony of her soul— One thought possessed her—it was Reginald, Reginald himself who was driving her forth—away from him.

She did not know who it was who put her out into the street, she walked on mechanically, aimlessly.

Some one had said, after the letter had been read, that the master was punishing her for the mischief she had wickedly done to the picture on that memorable night. She did not understand this remark at the time, but long afterwards it seemed to pierce her brain.

"Yes, that is it. He thought I was wicked. Why did I not confess to him then!" she said to herself. "Now I can do nothing. He would not listen to me— He has forbidden me to come before him again— If he would only kill me I would go back to him to die— But he would call them from afar to take me away, and I should never be able to see him again— Allah! Allah! have pity on my sorrow!"

On and on she wandered, not heeding whither she went, till at last her limbs were weary and she sank down not noticing where she was; but she was before the Khedive's palace and the Khedive was about to come out; so the *zaptiehs* kicked her till she got up, and thus suddenly roused from the lethargy into which she had fallen, she saw the men and thought at once they were going to take her to the convict prison at Fazogl. With a new strength born of terror, she gathered herself together, and fled, being soon lost in the distance.

\* \* \*

Reginald returned a few days later. He brought with him a tall young girl whose travelling costume of light grey cloth showed to advantage her well developed and elegant figure. Her high felt hat left her broad white forehead exposed to the rays of the Eastern sun, which tinged it with a deeper hue, and increased her appearance of magnificent health.

Reginald's sister, without being really beautiful, was a very attractive girl, with refined, polished, and sympathetic manners, one of that gracious type of the English woman of the upper classes who lives much on the Continent, has good taste in dress and a fine figure. The iris of her eyes—which were perhaps a little too large—reminded one of a dark topaz lying on black velvet, her cheek-bones were rather high, but the cheeks themselves delicately tinted as with an artist's brush; her nose was finely cut and her mouth small, with well curved rosy lips; her long hair, which she wore in a coil on the crown of her head, was of a bright rich brown.

Her installation at the villa took place in right merry style, with steeple-chases through the rooms, much jostling and bustling on the part of the servants, accompanied by shouts of laughter from the young master and mistress. Of course she soon made a tour of inspection and discovered hidden away in a corner the unfinished picture of Zorah in the midst of the heap of old weapons. She was delighted with it, yet angered. How, she asked, could her brother be so foolish as to give up a work so successfully begun. Where was the model who had sat for the little Arab girl? She would like to finish the picture herself. But she noticed that Reginald blushed and turned away, seeming embarrassed and hesitating in his reply; so she had the tact to turn the conversation, and for fear of vexing her brother never spoke again either of the picture or of the model, although she naturally felt curious as to the mystery she half-suspected was connected with them.

When Headley returned he was told that Foriere had gone on a long expedition, and he knew not to whom to apply for news of Zorah. He did not like to enquire of the servants who were sure to know, and he felt confusedly that his old jealousy was reviving, and that he would really be sorry to find that the girl had been so prompt in obeying his instructions. He could not bear to think of Zorah as married, and loving, "some horrid black fellow." Although this would only have been natural, it seemed to him to savour of sacrilege. What good was it then for him to try and learn more about the matter?

When brother and sister had performed such social duties as were













necessary in the way of visits and introductions, they set about exploring the neighbourhood.

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They preferred starting at sunrise, because that hour gives such exquisite colours and delicate tones. Mounted on strong little Egyptian donkeys they rode past the ancient granite quarries of Mokattam, behind the citadel, and after having passed through the ruinous quarters, a city of *débris*, and an abandoned necropolis, and saddened themselves with the sight of these melancholy relics of the past, they ascended the high plateau of the long arid mountain, and rejoiced in the triumphant revival of nature and the fairy panorama of a magnificent landscape.

Beneath a vale of light mist Cairo spread at their feet its countless domes and minarets, the outlines of which were as yet undefined, its low-roofed houses, and the confused shadows of its gardens. Then they gazed down at its populous outskirts with its markets for camels, buffalos, fruit, and vegetables, where a variegated and noisy crowd bustled to and fro. Everywhere some tributary of the Nile glistened like silver as it wound through thick verdure, through fields of *bersim*, cotton, and beans. They gazed at the city of the living and at the city of the dead, where no plant grew, and naught was to be seen but white stones fallen or standing, with here and there the tombs of Khalifs and of Mamelukes. Beneath them, close to the sides of Mokattam, lay the citadel and the mosque of Mahomet-Ali, the pointed minarets of which are visible for miles round Cairo. Lastly, the Nile, which descending from the distant blue horizon, seems to come from heaven, and flows almost in a straight line between forests of date-palms, narrow strips of fertile land, and the huge pyramidal tombs raised by the Pharaohs along its banks. Beyond that the endless grey sea of the desert, the waves of which have mauve shadows in the light of early morning.

When the sun dispersed the mists and heated the air, which seemed to pulsate and vibrate with life, the horizon grew full of mirages; the sand appeared as if covered with water and suddenly forests of palms seemed to spring from the earth with their roots in the air, head downwards

—then dazzled and giddy with sunlight they went home to the villa, where it was always cool and shady. After the siesta they drove to Boulak, the port of Cairo, and went on board a gaily painted *dahabieh*, the crescent shaped sail of which made it look more like a bird than a boat.

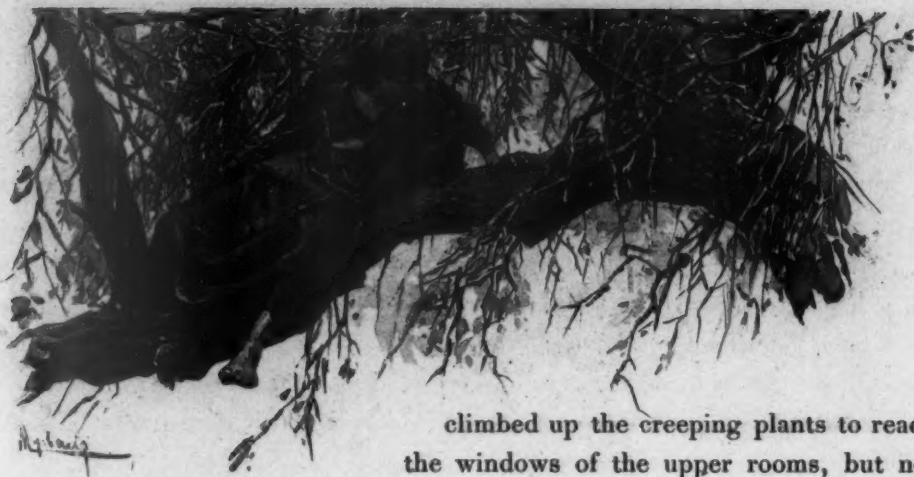
Every day they saw something fresh. One day the Serapeum, another day Memphis; then the Pyramids, and after that Heliopolis. They visited the old mosques in the most dangerous and curious parts of the Mahometan quarters. At night-fall they came home dusty, footsore, and tired, but excited and delighted, laden with riches and bright with health. If, in the evening, they did not visit European friends or witness some Arab or Coptic entertainment, they would lounge in their long deck chairs on the verandah, and chat of their new life in Egypt and of their youth and early friends away in Ireland.

The girl talked in a low clear voice the very tone of which was caressing, and the young man, in speaking to his "dear Lucy," lost the harsh guttural accent which had become habitual to him, and softened his voice to suit his tender and affectionate words.

Sometimes they sat at the piano and sang the popular songs of their native land—songs of memory and of hope; for although they were so happy in the beautiful land of the Pharaohs, there was just an under-current of sadness, well expressed in those plaintive melodies. If, during those peaceful hours, they had suddenly turned towards the garden, they would have seen something strange and startling—a little dark face drawn as with pain and passion fixing upon them its brilliant eyes, which seemed to burn through the darkness like the eyes of a wild animal.

For a long time past a small fragile figure had come down every evening with soft cat-like movements from the old sycamore, and crept quite unobserved up to the bed of chrysanthemums which reached to the verandah beneath the dining-room windows— When only the head appeared with its restless curious oscillations, it might from the distance have been mistaken for the head of some large snake, whose coils were hidden among the flowers, silently watching its prey.

One night—before Reginald returned from Ireland—this little figure had scaled the wall of the garden, searched eagerly about the enclosure,



climbed up the creeping plants to reach the windows of the upper rooms, but not daring to enter the house, had taken refuge in the sycamore. Afterwards it was from this tree she descended at night to make her strange investigations.

The arrival of the brother and sister did not interrupt her nightly proceedings; but when towards dawn she returned to the leafy branches of the tree, she did not move with her former air of dejection.

Zorah was content—she had found Reginald.

...The fruit of the sycamore was her only food. The first time she had ventured into the garden, the tree had seemed to open its arms to her, and she had crept into it as into a safe resting-place; now she lived among its branches like the birds themselves.

The wild, passionate love of the past months was growing gradually calmer in her heart.

Without reasoning about it she accepted what she knew to be her fate, and resigned herself to become an outcast forgotten by all the world. It was pain enough to think that Reginald believed her to be wicked and ungrateful, that he would never smile at her again, never speak to her nor guess how she worshipped him! To know that she was banished for ever from his presence and had not even the right to seek a glance from his eyes; but she did not always ponder on this source of grief, she was at peace and happy for nights and days when she had heard him laugh or sing, or when he had rested beneath the shade of the sycamore—her tree.



During the first few weeks which followed his return, Zorah's whole soul was absorbed in the contemplation of Reginald, and she took little notice of Lucy. She neither knew nor cared in what relation this girl stood to him, and their conversation, of which she could only understand a word or two now and then, when they spoke in French, gave no clue to the solution of this enigma.

What would have been her feelings if she had known that they were only brother and sister? In spite of her ignorance of the laws of society she knew perfectly well that the Koran forbids intermarriage between children of the same parents. Yet it is doubtful whether, even knowing this, she would long have remained indifferent to the gentle attention paid by Reginald to Lucy. It is an open question whether she would have grown madly jealous of their friendly intercourse and deep affection, or whether she would have learnt to love the sister for the sake of the brother, and to rejoice in their mutual happiness.

One day when she was asleep, completely hidden by the leafy interlacing of the branches of the tree, she was suddenly awakened by a great noise in the garden. Lucy had just run out of the house apparently in a very bad temper, and Reginald was running after her, pausing now and then to enjoy a hearty laugh. Then ensued a regular chase up one path and down another, through beds of plants which caught in Lucy's skirts as she passed, and rebounding struck against Reginald as he hurried after her, and left them nodding their heads together as if consulting as to the possible cause of such foolish behaviour on the part of their master and mistress. At last he caught her at an angle of two paths, and seizing her in his arms kissed her loudly several times in spite of her resistance, teasing her and laughing at her angry words. When at last he let her go, she marched off to the sycamore and sat down beneath it to sulk, with a book on her knees. A few minutes later Reginald came up and kneeling by her side began to play the penitent and ask forgiveness. Zorah, who had eagerly watched the whole proceedings, now grew as angry at Lucy's coldness as she had been pained at witnessing the kisses bestowed on her by Reginald. She thought that Reginald was in love with this girl, and that like her—

Zorah—he loved in vain—— This reminded her of her own sorrow; she wept as much for him as for herself, but she dried her eyes and a cold shiver passed over her when she saw Lucy kiss the young man on the brow and return gaily with him to the house.

She longed to spring down from the tree, to strike this wretched interloper in the face and insult her with all the abusive terms she knew: "*Inhal abonah bent el kalb!*" (May thy father be accursed, thou daughter of a dog!) May the colic seize your vitals! May the sand enter your eyes!"

From that day she was a prey to the most bitter jealousy. As she was unable to distinguish friendship from love, she saw in all the attentions lavished by Reginald upon his sister fresh proofs of his passion. She watched them furtively, feverishly interpreting the most insignificant trifles as evidence in support of her theory.

She hated Lucy and was furious at almost everything she did. She had named her *Umma alah* (the mother of music); for she had not been able to catch the name by which Reginald called her, and so invented one, according to the custom of the Arabs, who, when they do not know the name of a man, or even of an animal, seize upon some physical or mental peculiarity from which to coin a name, adding to it the words *abu* (father) or *umma* (mother). Zorah who, at first, could not understand European music, soon grew to love it, and forgot all her troubles when the "mother of music" allowed her hands to wander over the key-board, which Zorah called "the father of teeth," or sang in her sweet pure voice the melodies she liked best. The ignorant little listener imagined that Lucy had received from Heaven the special gift of music, and that was why she called her "the mother of music."

Now her reflections grew more and more bitter—— What was she compared to the *Umma alah*?—— If ever Reginald were to allow her to come back to him, would he not take a dislike to her at once? How hideous she would appear to him by the side of that tall girl with the pink and white complexion whom he loved! It would be far better for her never to venture out of the shade of the sycamore!—— She felt then as if she had fallen, breaking her limbs and bruising her flesh, to the bottom of a mountain, at the summit of which Lucy stood erect and radiant.



...This was why, if the brother and sister had turned in the evening towards the garden, they would have seen the apparition of a dark little face contracted as with a spasm of pain, which gazed at them with the shining eyes of a wild beast.

One night she nearly betrayed her presence by cries of rage, and then, fearful of discovery, she scaled the wall and fled away from Cairo.

\*  
\* \*

The streets were crowded with people of many nationalities, all noisy and merry; processions passed, of dervishes and fanatics of all kinds with banners, torches, and bands of music at their heads; there were enormous swings, and tents of many colours, refreshment booths where dancing and drinking were going on, and men shouting themselves hoarse in the effort to attract people to see the magic lanterns they were about to exhibit; water-carriers, sweetmeat sellers, negro minstrels were promenading about. Cairo was celebrating the birthday of the Prophet.

Lucy and Reginald were worn out, they had wished to see everything and were at last going to rest a little, when they were told that the *Docch* which closes the tenth day of the festival was about to begin.

They drove at once to an immense square in one of the suburbs. There also were tents, but these were of finer texture, handsomely decorated with flags and lanterns. The Viceroy and each of the Pachas had a special tent for himself and harem, and each of the Consuls had also secured one to shelter himself, his family, and his privileged fellow-countrymen. Thousands of handsome carriages and hired vehicles surrounded the place, and these were closely pressed by troops of soldiers, *zaptiehs*, and a vast crowd of Egyptians of both sexes, of all classes and ages. A terrible noise and confusion prevailed, above which were heard the sharp sounds of the *zoumaras*, the melancholy *daraboukos*, and the curious wail which Arab women utter as a means of expressing their emotions. Thanks to the armed guard of the English Consul, Lucy and her brother were able to make their way to his tent, where two chairs had been reserved for them. They saw before them a large space of open ground which the *zaptiehs* and the members of religious sects carefully defended



against invasion. In this space a number of dervishes and jugglers were circling round, barking and yelling, and going through an absurd performance with fire, sabres, and snakes. Suddenly a fearful clamour arose from one side and the music reached its climax of deafening incoherence. All the people who had been shouting the praises of Allah fell down side by side upon their faces, so as to make a carpet of human bodies covering the space which had been reserved. Like every one else, Lucy and Reginald leant forward and saw a very fat old man with ecstasy painted on his countenance, mounted on a superb white mule and supported by a man on each side; he wore a large green turban and a long caftan of dark green, green being the colour of the Prophet. He was the Sheik of the howling dervishes on his way to visit the *Sheik-el-Bekri*. The mule, always guarded by the man on either side, stepped nervously on the unaccustomed ground, which moved and slipped beneath him. As the mule advanced, the banners were waved above the heads of the crowd, and the babel of sounds if possible increased, so that the groans of the wounded could not be distinguished amid the triumphant hosannahs. After the Sheik had passed, the fanatics rose, or were helped up, the whole persons of those who were neither dead nor fainting, twitching with excitement, their eyes bright with religious enthusiasm. No Mahometan seemed to think that any harm had been done; for it was firmly believed that the mule could do no injury even to those who came for the purpose of suffering martyrdom. It is scarcely five years since European intervention managed to obtain the suppression of this ceremony.

Every one had gone to the *Doceh*. Like all the other residences Headley's villa was quite deserted when, about the middle of the day, Zorah made her appearance at the gate. She had grown even thinner if possible, her hollow eyes had a fierce light in them. Her torn galabieh floated on the air, its sleeves seeming too large for her arms, which were mere skin and bone. The torn veil which had been her pride now trailed behind her on the ground. She looked about her anxiously, then finding that she was quite alone she climbed over the gate and sprang into the garden. She entered the house quickly, her first idea being to go upstairs, but she changed her mind and entered the dining-room

where the table was already laid. She walked round the table to where Lucy's silver goblet stood, and with her finger rubbed into it a green paste which left no stain upon the metal. She smiled savagely while she was doing this, and as soon as she had finished she took up Reginald's serviette, kissed it passionately, and then left the room as silently as she had entered it and took refuge once more in the sycamore.

The brother and sister returned a few minutes afterwards, followed by their servants. Lucy, who was horrified with what she had seen, would not wait till the end of the ceremony. "It was dreadful," she exclaimed, over luncheon. "I am quite upset; I know I shall not have a moment's peace to-night. I shall think of all those people and their frightful contortions and of those horrible mangled bodies."

Reginald laughed. "If you are frightened, you can knock at the wall and I can talk to you through it. I'll speak loud enough to drive away the ghosts, I promise you."

Their chat lasted a long time, and Zorah listened from her hiding-place watchful and impatient for *something* to happen.

At last the young man speaking in French as usual to the Barberino, told him to bring the coffee out into the verandah, saying to his sister in the same language: "I think I ought not to have begun drinking before I ate, as it was so warm. I feel as if I were choking—and my head swims." He sank into one of the deck chairs, and Lucy, growing anxious, sent at once for a doctor.

Zorah who had heard what Reginald said, at once understood what had happened. Being very thirsty he had evidently caught up the first drinking vessel that was to hand, and had taken the goblet which she had poisoned. She had killed the man she loved better than life, for there is no antidote to the vegetable poison made in the harems; whoever drinks of it is lost. She was paralysed with horror.

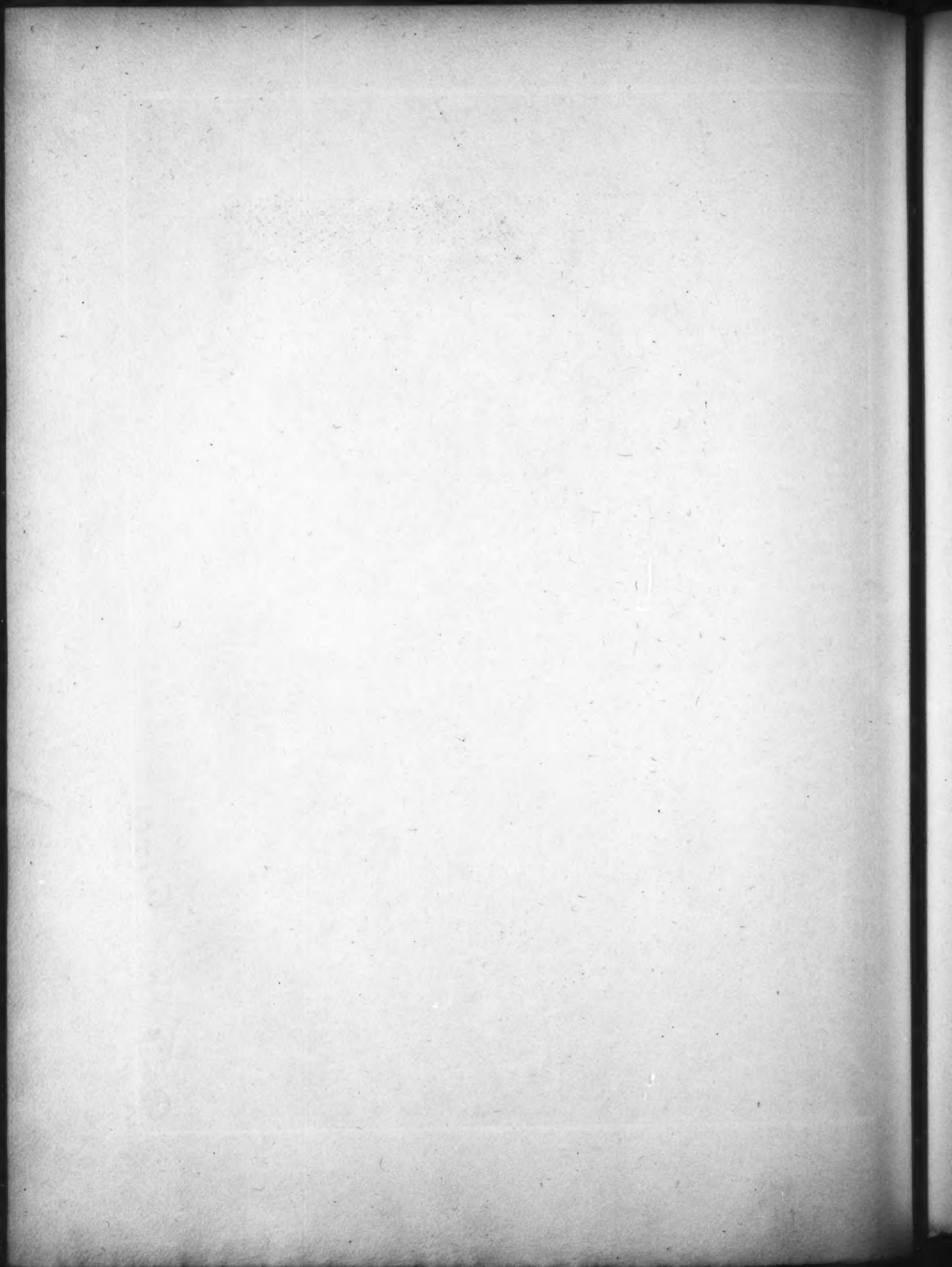
Soon after Reginald was seized with agonising spasms, his face changed colour, his sight failed, and his tongue swelled; a white foam appeared at the corners of the mouth, breathing, which from the first had been laboured and hoarse, became still more difficult, breath being drawn only at long intervals, and when the doctor arrived there seemed already no hope.













The servants had found near at hand an old Levantine doctor of the true Oriental pattern, not too friendly to Europeans. He knew that Headley filled an important post and had made many enemies in the Mussulman world. After having looked at the patient he said abruptly to Lucy : "Did your brother drink anything while he was out to-day?"

"Yes, some coffee in the tent of S. M. Pacha; why do you ask?"

"That is my business—— what did he do afterwards? what did he eat?" And so on he continued his questions, but not for the purpose of altering his diagnosis; that could not change. He felt sure that poisoned coffee had been given to the young Englishman in revenge for some political slight, and foreseeing trouble for himself if he should express this opinion, he determined to keep his own counsel and assured Lucy that Reginald was suffering from an attack of apoplexy brought on by the heat of the morning. Feeling sure that nothing he could do would be of any service, he wrote his prescription slowly and quietly, begging Lucy to be calm and resigned. She, however, paid no attention to him and sent for another doctor. At the first attack Reginald had been carried to his room, and she had persevered in giving him antidotes and stimulants and applying ice to the head and doing everything she could think of that might effect the cure. She entreated "Reggie" to listen to her, to speak to her, to drink—— She prayed aloud to God in the piteous voice of a little child, saying that He was too good to allow her Reggie to die.

But Reginald breathed his last whilst the servant was fetching the second doctor. The old Levantine wrote a certificate of death by apoplexy, and gravely retired. He met the other on the stairs and told him that all was over, so that as he was very busy he did not wait to enter the death chamber.

The servants ran about the house, wildly tearing their hair and shrieking. Zorah lay in her tree without strength or will to move. Her brain seemed to have given way under this crowning sorrow, she felt a something inevitable, terrible, and evil which pursued her, and she submitted blindly to Fate.

After the official announcement of the death of Sir Reginald Headley, all the members of the English Colony came to offer their condolences

and their services, to poor Lucy who was now left alone in the world.

But Lucy was a true northerner, who knew how to control herself, and her grief was dumb, tearless, and without open expression— She would not allow any one to watch with her over the body of her brother, and no one dared to oppose her in this.

Nevertheless in the middle of the night her strength gave way. She asked herself why she should survive all whom she had loved. She wept for the memory of the dead and for her own sorrows. Despair urged her to lie down and die and be at rest. Then the words which expressed these thoughts haunted her as she stood beside the still white form of the brother she loved, who would never speak to her, never look on her, never smile at her again, who would soon pass away from her sight for ever—dust to dust.

"This is the end of all," she cried, "all is over—all is over! Nothing—no power on earth can revoke the decree—it is irrevocable, absolutely." And feeling the impotence of human love and longing in the face of death, the great divider, she felt her breast rent with cries which she could hardly repress—the cries of a hunted creature in its death struggle.

Suddenly she thought she must be dreaming or mad, for she heard from near at hand the sound of those very cries she had striven to repress. Through the silence of the night a wailing rose in reply to her inward agony—a long wail of lamentation which filled the air with a sense of utter desolation.

Lucy started up in terror, marvelling whence the cries could proceed. In the lighted chamber there was none besides herself and the still form of her brother. Then she remembered that among Arab women it is a time-honoured custom to utter loud lamentations for the dead. She said to herself: "It is Eminah mourning for her master— It is too painful, I must go and silence her." But then she perceived with a shudder of fear that the voice came not from below where the servants slept, but from *above* where there could be no human being— Why or what could it be? She stepped bravely to the window which was wide open, and gazed out.

She saw in a halo of pale light, suspended to the nearest branches



of the sycamore of which Reginald had been so fond, a being which to her excited imagination was a monster resembling an enormous bat; its bright phosphorescent eyes were fixed upon the body of the young man.

The ghostly legends of the East sprang to her disordered and anguished mind— This, she thought, must be a vampire— and in the horror of the moment she fainted away.

\* \* \*

The next day a long procession of carriages, of Consuls in full dress, of Pachas in uniform and of men clothed in black, accompanied by a guard of soldiers, followed the coffin of Sir Reginald Headley to the railway station, for Lucy had resolved to take her brother back to Ireland to the burial place of all their family.

The hearse, which was a magnificent open one of black and gold, rolled slowly and heavily along, drawn by four splendid black horses.

The procession had passed down the avenue for a few hundred yards when Lucy, who was seated in one of the mourning coaches with the clergyman and an English lady, broke silence and told them her adventure of the preceeding night. Her friends tried to make her believe that it was only a terrible dream, natural enough after the painful emotions of the day, and during a death watch such as she was keeping. She, however, felt convinced of the perfectly clear condition of her mind up till the moment when she fainted, and she had closed her eyes endeavouring to recall the phantasmal vision which she had described, when the carriage drew up suddenly as a clamour arose and people rushed to the front. All three sprang to the window to see what had happened, and her companions wisely endeavoured to prevent Lucy from leaving the coach, but she waved them aside, hastened down, and pushed her way forward into the midst of a crowd which had gathered round the hearse.

As she came up the soldiers were drawing out from beneath the last wheel of the heavy vehicle a formless mass of blue rags, clotted with mud and from which thin streams of blood were flowing. A moment more and she distinguished little thin brown hands and feet, a head with long plaited hair, and a face, the expression of which was one of calm



joy, the wide open eyes seeming still to see and gazing towards the coffin.

A few moments after the departure a childish form had been seen to fall down from a sycamore and run after the funeral procession crying in Arabic : "Wait for me, I am coming with him, I am coming with him." She had called three times upon the name of Allah, and then, tearing herself free from the hands which had sought to hold her back, she had thrown herself beneath the wheels of the hearse, which owing to its weight could not at once be stopped.

Lucy looked on and listened, pale and trembling, spasmodically clutching the arm of the minister, and swaying to and fro in her grief and horror. She remembered and understood all now— A succession of images passed rapidly through her excited brain—the child of the picture, Reginald, the fanatics of the *Docch*, the apparition of last night— It was too much for her, and again she fainted.

While she was borne away, unconscious, to the railway station, the remains of Zorah were left in the charge of a *zaptieh*.

"She must have been drunk or mad," somebody said, and that was her requiem.

Surely Zorah was not of much account in the world.

LÉO POLDEY.



## THE OPERA BEFORE THE REVOLUTION<sup>(\*)</sup>

THE REIGN OF LOUIS XVI



The advent of Gluck was nothing short of a thunder-clap in the midst of an Opera wholly devoted to ballet, and thrust into the shade the crowd who were trying their hardest to take the place of Rameau : Dauvergne and Floquet, Mondonville and Berton, Monsigny and Philidor. While these people were contending for the empire of Alexander, a creative genius, already famous in Italy and Germany, was cherishing the idea of a thorough reform of the lyric drama, and the only stage he could see that offered him a chance of making his experiment with success was the French. He

broached the subject to the Bailly du Roullet, who at the time was at Vienna, attached to the French Embassy, and between them they conceived the plan of developing a lyric tragedy from Racine's *Iphigénie*, which Noverre had just turned into a ballet. Du Roullet wrote to the management suggesting that they should engage the foreign composer and produce his

(\*) See *Art and Letters*, for August and September, 1888. T. III, p. 128 and 338.

*Iphigénie*; but the negotiations dragged, hindered by difficulties of every kind, until the Dauphine intervened in favour of her old harpsichord master and secured his engagement. As soon as his visit to Paris was announced, what a storm of jests broke forth at the expense of this unknown celebrity who professed to be a universal reformer, nay, to rise a head and shoulders above Rameau; but what a thrill too, of curiosity about the *protégé* of the future Queen, and what a capital way of gaining her good graces it would be to uphold the musician of her choice!

The first representation of *Iphigénie en Aulide*, which took place on the 19th of April, 1774, gave rise to extraordinary curiosity in the capital. From the stroke of half past five, the usual hour for commencing a performance that was expected to end between eight and nine, the house was crowded by an audience feverish with excitement. The Dauphin and Dauphine, the Count and Countess de Provence occupied their boxes, to say nothing of the Duchesses de Chartres and de Bourbon, the Princess de Lamballe, the princes, ministers, the whole Court in short, and all the opera-lovers and sight-seers who had succeeded in squeezing into the house. There was, moreover, general silence, the presence of the Royal family forbidding applause, but after the recitative of Agamemnon, which follows the overture without a break, Marie-Antoinette clapped her hands; at this signal bravos burst forth from all sides to hail the appearance of a masterpiece. And three months later, still more irresistible was the enthusiasm aroused by *Orphée*, although Marie-Antoinette, who had become Queen in the mean time, but was still in mourning for Louis XV, was unable to give it the support of her presence. What a surprise to find that the harpsichord for accompaniments had disappeared from the orchestra, what a treat to hear for the first time a harp at the Opera, a harp played by Sieber, the first horn, for they had not engaged a special performer! Curiosity, both in regard to *Orphée* and, later on, for *Alceste*, had reached such a pitch that it had been impossible to refuse to let many influential personages be present at the final rehearsals.

It was a most comical thing to see the musician working himself into a frenzy to bring the chorus up to the mark; pushing one here, and pulling another there! And in the heat of action, he would throw



off wig, coat, waistcoat, and then put on a night-cap to avoid catching cold! Afterwards, on the rehearsal coming to an end, great nobles and princes contended for the privilege of handing him his overcoat or his wig, and of helping him to dress again; it was then a caprice of the aristocracy to put itself at the disposal of genius. Grétry, who at the same time was rehearsing his *Céphale et Procris*, gives a good idea of what the chorus and principal singers of the Opera were like. "At this epoch, it was understood that, choruses and dance tunes excepted, there should be no strict time observed at the Opera. If any lines in the recitative lent themselves to expression, the actor rendered them with as much pretension as though they were a pathetic air. If the accompaniment forced him to follow strongly marked rhythm, he only succeeded in doing so in the rear of the orchestra; thence resulted a shock, a counterpoint, a perpetual syncope, the effect of which may easily be guessed." How many scores of times have people quoted from Grétry the famous objurgation Sophie Arnould addressed to Dauvergne, the leader of the orchestra: "Time? What animal's that? Follow me, sir, and understand that your symphony is the very humble servant of the actress who recites." And on Dauvergne's trying to explain the distinction between recitative and set melody: "Come, come," she interrupted, "have done with all these fooleries and follow me."

Gluck, in the flush of his first successes, had returned to Vienna, where he had just finished *Armide*, when he learnt that his rival Piccinni had been commissioned to write an opera of *Roland* in competition with himself. His own was already commenced. At this news he threw up the work and gave his reasons in a very high-flown letter to Du Roullet, which the latter published in the *Année Littéraire*, thereby setting everything in a blaze. Forthwith two violent camps were formed; the men of letters grouped themselves some in one camp, some in the other, and the newspapers especially, the *Mercure* and the *Journal de Paris*, were filled every morning with jokes and epigrams that the party chiefs flung at one another; Suard and the Abbé Arnaud were for Gluck, Marmontel and Ginguené for Piccinni. It was at the very height of this conflict that were produced in rapid succession those two masterpieces, *Armide* and *Iphigénie en Tauride*;

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*Du Vendredi 7 Novembre 1777.*

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# SPECTACLES DES BOULEVARDS.

*Du Vendredi 7 Novembre 1777.*

## LES GRANDS DANSEURS DU ROI.

La Corne de vérité; l'Habit ne fait pas l'Homme; Arlequin Roi des Chinois, Pantomime à Machines, & un Divertissement, précédé des Sauteurs.

Demain.

A Fripon & demi, double Friponne.

## AMBIGU-COMIQUE.

LE RÉPERTOIRE, dans lequel le petit-Fils de feu M. Armand, Comédien du Roi, âgé de sept ans, remplira plusieurs Rôles. Cette Pièce sera suivie du CHAUDRONNIER, & terminé par le BRACONNIER, Pantomime.



De l'Imp. de P. DE LORMEL rue du Foir.

the first, contrary to all expectation, was received somewhat coldly and was slow in conquering the admiration of the public, while the second carried away all Paris by the power of its dramatic expression, and silenced Gluck's fiercest enemies.

This enthusiasm spread even to the artists of the Opera, whom Gluck had roughly handled at the start, but whom he knew wonderfully well how to flatter. Was it not Larrivée who one fine day exclaimed : "There is only one truth in the world, and it is Gluck who has discovered it!" And this simply because the latter, who wanted to get the first-rate singer, the artist who had created Agamemnon, then Hercules, and who was in time to play Orestes, to undertake the minor part of Ubaldo in *Armide*, had graciously said to him : "It is not a part that I offer you; it is only a line, a mere word, but I need you to render it; the whole piece is in that word." Larrivée, indeed, had been, as it were, transformed under the influence of Gluck, had so devoted himself to the master's music, that when the time came for him to take his pension, after twenty-five years' service, Gluck, who still had need of him for the Orestes, of *Iphigénie en Tauride*, brought his influence to bear on both singer and management, and ended by obtaining the conclusion of a new engagement. And Legros, the first of all tenors in Gluck's repertory, who created his five great operas, in addition to *Écho et Narcisse*, Legros with the flexible, light, moving contralto voice, could he be other than a partisan of the composer who entrusted to him parts like Orpheus and Admetus, like Rinaldo and Pylades, while Lainez, who was to succeed him later on, had already distinguished himself by taking the place of his principal in *Alceste* and owed to this success the honour of creating the Danish Knight? And so these names figure among the first with those of Gélén and Roland, also singers, of Berton, Gossec, Leduc, and Langlé, all four composers, in the list of people who, in 1776, in presence of Notary Lemoine, guarantee the expenses of a marble bust of Chevalier Gluck : it is to be the admirable bust by Caffieri.

By the side of Larrivée and Legros, two women took an equally brilliant part in the creation of the chief parts in Gluck's operas, one was Sophie Arnould, the other Rosalie Levasseur. Sophie, after the great



success she had achieved as Iphigenia and Eurydice, fully expected to keep the first place, and if she had misgivings about any one, assuredly they were not about the precocious singer, a mother at nine years old, who, under the name of Rosalie, had created the insignificant part of Cupid in *Orphée*; it was this very woman who wrested from her the admirable parts of Alcestis, Armida and Iphigenia. The fact is this Rosalie, having resumed her family name, to avoid all confusion with a heroine of Palissot's comedy, *Les Courtisanes*, was the acknowledged mistress of the Count de Mercy-Argenteau, Ambassador of the Holy Roman Empire; she enjoyed such complete ascendancy over this diplomatist—though betraying him all the while, in the open sight of all Paris, with the merry-andrew of the Nicolet theatre—that the Count, who ultimately married her, had bought her a Barony of the Holy Empire, bringing in an income of close on twenty-five thousand *livres*. Then, when the Ambassador asked Gluck, who was a constant guest of the Levasseur's, to be good enough to choose her for Alcestis, the musician had no choice but to obey, and forthwith Sophie Arnould, mightily put out, began to hail gibes upon her rival: "They applaud her, you tell me? That is not surprising, she has the voice of the people." But behold the Levasseur, in her turn, stung with jealousy at seeing Larrivée more applauded than herself in *Adèle de Ponthieu*, and begging the Count either to stop the run of the piece or, with the help of hard cash, to induce Larrivée to abandon his part to an understudy; the affair leaks out, the ballad-writers give both songstress and Ambassador a fearful dressing.

Who is this pretty blonde, with the tender and seductive glance, who is not long in gaining possession of the part of Alcestis and in posing as a rival to both the Levasseur and Sophie Arnould? Quite a young girl, Mademoiselle Laguerre, at the outset a mere chorister, who had sprung from the lowest depths, and had narrowly escaped being discharged from the Opera, for having been caught in a too intimate conversation, in one of the boxes, with M. de Meslay, President of the *Chambre des Comptes*; who had then gone on to understudying minor parts and had reached the first rank almost at a bound, thanks to the beauty of her face and the rich quality of her voice. While preserving throughout

the tastes of her early days, indulging in innumerable intrigues with Volange, the actor, and Cassaigne, an apothecary, whom they used jocularly to name at the Opera the principal clerk of La Guerre (War Office), she led the life of a princess, had managed to ruin the Duke de Bouillon in three months—to the tune of eight hundred thousand *livres*—and to squander in two years the colossal fortune of Haudry de Soucy, the farmer-general. With all that, a very good-natured creature, never betraying people, giving them, if necessary, warning of what was sure to happen to them, and turning everything into money, having regular sales of furniture and jewelry, so as to procure others from the next lover she caught in her toils; having, moreover, an unconquerable fancy for the bottle, a weakness that had cost her the penalty of imprisonment, one day that she had appeared quite drunk on the stage to play in Piccinni's *Iphigénie*. "It is not *Iphigénie en Tauride*," said Sophie Arnould, "it is *Iphigénie en Champagne*." Sophie had no need to gibe, she was soon to be rid of her young rival, who died at the age of twenty-eight.

A Durfort il faut Duthé  
 C'est sa fantaisie;  
 Soubise, moins dégoûté,  
 Aime la Prairie.  
 Mais Bouillon qui, pour son Roi,  
 Mettrait tout en désarroi,  
 Aime mieux Laguerre,  
 O gué,  
 Aime mieux Laguerre.

So hummed all Paris—in three couplets—while Laguerre was making such brilliant havoc with the fortune of the Duke de Bouillon, and the latter must have been the first to laugh at the puns of this pleasing song, for he made similar ones at the expense of his own family. "They make out," said he, "that our race has degenerated, that we are no longer the warlike descendants of Godefroy de Bouillon; that is a mistake, a calumny. Look at it in this way; I am fond of *Laguerre*, my father loves *La Victoire*, and my son's sole passion is *La Bataille*." Out of these four charming creatures the Prairie alone belonged to the Opera, where she was a mere supernumerary. As for the Duthé, she was simply one of the most famous courtezans of the eighteenth century,

while her rival at the Longchamps tourney in 1774, the Cléophile, was a ballet dancer. These two ladies on the day in question vied with each other in the luxury and wanton splendour of their toilette and their six-horse equipages, and the public with one voice awarded the palm to the Cléophile, though recognizing at the same time that her saucy little face could not compare with the regular beauty of the Duthé. The latter was financed by the Count d'Artois, the former by the Duke d'Aranda, the Spanish Ambassador. And in delight at the triumph that the Duke had been the means of procuring her, she let herself gently fall into the arms of Laharpe who had long been sighing after her.

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The Academy of Music at the epoch of *Alceste* and *Armide* was managed by a committee on which the representatives of the King sat alongside those of the city, and these improvised managers, financiers or retired tradesmen, all equally ill-versed in theatrical affairs, were at infinite pains to fill the empty treasury. They introduced reforms with the best intentions, but without intelligence; they obtained two decrees from the Council of State, one embodying regulations for the public, the other for the actors and dancers; in short, they more or less disturbed everybody, and, as they tried to do at the Opera what the wise Turgot was undertaking for the finances of the kingdom, they were made all the more laughable by the institution of comparisons between their little State and the great one. The artists, who were put out by this reforming zeal, were the first to make game of their managers; they even produced a fairly amusing caricature at their expense, which greatly diverted the public. The thing represented a grand council, wherein the administrators summoned before them their new subjects. M. de la Ferté, Superintendent of the Menus-Plaisirs, representing the Minister and President, was armed with a stick to correct those who failed to show him proper respect; his nephew, M. Désentelles, as the youngest, was conning the new regulations; M. Hébert, treasurer of the Menus-Plaisirs, was busily thrusting bags of money into his pocket; M. Buffault, an ex-silk-mercator of the Rue de la Monnaie, at the sign of the *Traits galants*, was measuring with a



wand the voice of a great lamp-post of a singer planted in front of him his mouth wide open and stretching from ear to ear; M. Bourboulon, financier, was carefully counting out penny pieces as each dancer's share of pay for one performance; in short, it was a general mockery.

After them, there came an active, intelligent man, who was perhaps the best manager of the Academy of Music in the last century, and who could not hold out long in the midst of the intrigues and obstacles raised up against him in the theatre itself; this was a sub-director of taxes, the Squire de Vismes du Valgay, who had taken over the management at his own risk and responsibility for twelve years, and who gave it up at the end of three. He it was who produced *Iphigénie en Tauride*, but it was above all by his activity, by his frequent change of repertory, by his revivals of divers neglected operas that he succeeded in restoring the Opera to a semblance of life. The better to demonstrate his idea, he took it into his head to compose himself and to get Grétry to set to music a prologue entitled *Les Trois Ages de l'Opéra*. By this he meant, you will have guessed, the periods of Lulli, Rameau and Gluck. What is more, he decided on opening the theatre every night, and, recalling the success the Italian Buffo-singers had had in 1752, he sent for a company of them who performed alternately with the ordinary *troupe*, singing Italian operas by Anfossi, Piccinni, Traetta and Sacchini. He had also engaged the brothers Galliari, Italian scene-painters of repute, and the public crowded to an entertainment so brilliant; but the manager ruined himself at this game. Créfil retired in time to save his purse and was succeeded by Berton, the composer, who was fated to die in poverty. The ladies especially rejoiced at the departure of the uncivil manager who had actually dared to banish from his amphitheatre pyramidal head-gear, plumes, and puffs. Did not a famous ladies' hair-dresser, the Saint-Quentin, take up this challenge in her own way by naming her latest and most monumental invention: *coiffure à la De Vismes*?

The chief parts, according to the traditions of the last century, were those of love-lorn princesses. Thus Sophie Arnould, in the exercise of her right, claimed for herself the character of Iphigenia, in *Iphigénie en Aulide*, leaving the really more important one of Clytemnestra to Made-

moiselle Duplan, who was specially engaged for "duenna" and "flirt" parts. In this line, the latter, with her fine figure and the great compass of her voice, was excellent and she long held possession of it at the Academy. She more than once encountered the gibes of the sarcastic Sophie. One day that a huge butcher's dog had wandered on to the stage, Sophie Arnould calls the brute to her and leads it towards her comrade, at that time honoured with the favour of a big cattle-dealer: "Queen, behold the ambassador of your lover!" says she, parodying with comic emphasis, Gluck's recitative. Alongside the Duplan shone the Beaumesnil, who was a successful understudy for Sophie in princesses or shepherdesses, and who saw with no little irritation the rise of Rosalie Levasseur, thanks to the good offices of Mercy-Argenteau. What then did she do? She appealed to the public against being passed over in a letter published in the *Journal de Paris*. Imagine the rage and exasperation of the Levasseur, who behind the scenes falls foul of a certain M. de la Tour, a great friend of the Beaumesnil's; thereupon ensues a lively retort from the latter, followed by a simultaneous threat of retirement from both the rivals; they remained, however, and ultimately made it up again.

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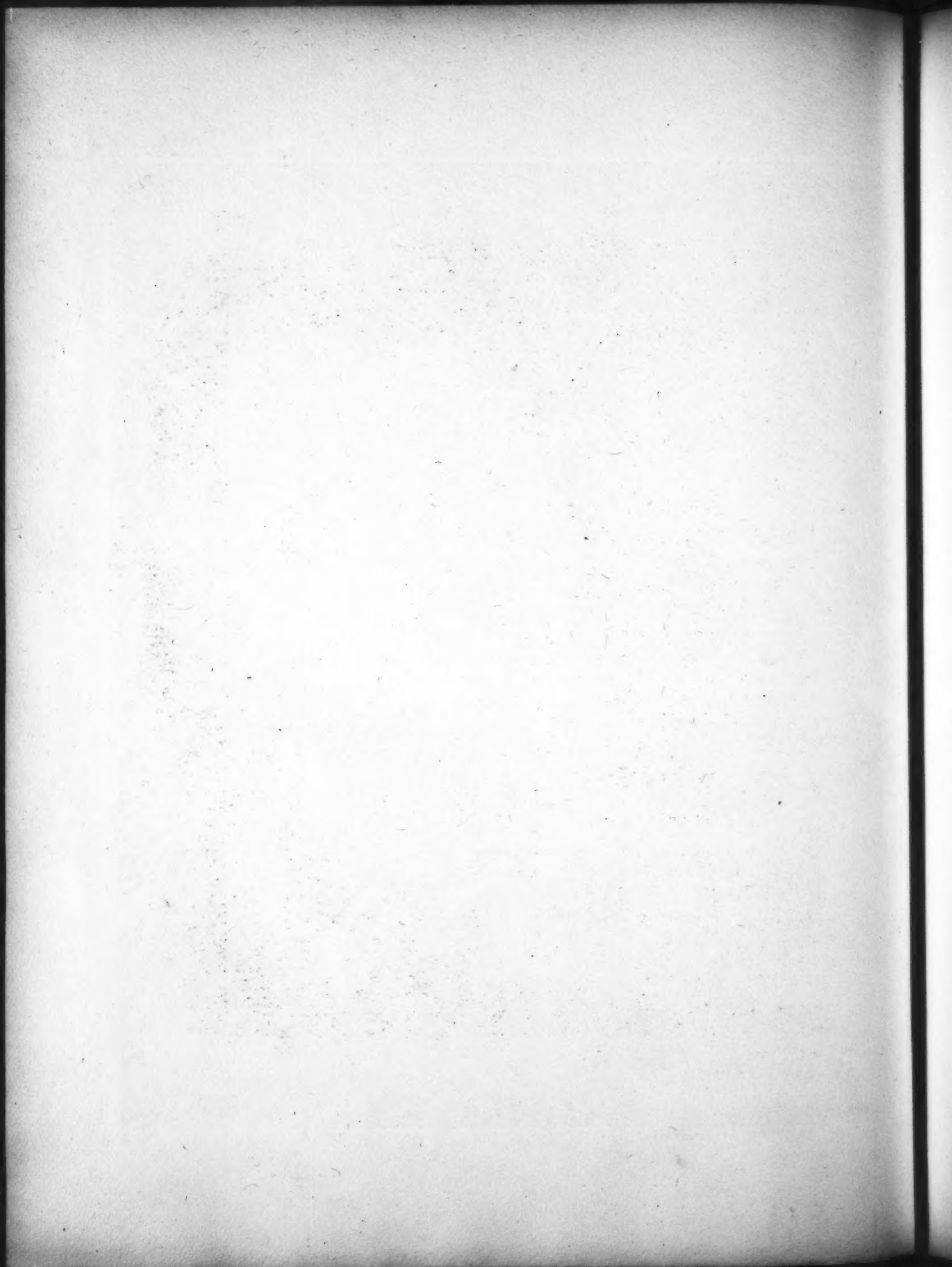
On the 8th of June, 1781, a fearful fire destroyed the younger Moreau's fine house at the end of a performance in which they had played *Orphée* and the short ballet of *Apollon et Coronis*. Dauberval, seeing a bit of canvas on fire, had the presence of mind to get the curtain lowered, so that the public, though inclined to think the conclusion rather abrupt, left the theatre without a rush. But the fire made rapid progress on the stage and cut off the musicians in the orchestra, who had lingered behind, as well as some dancers and machinists in the flies of the theatre; in short, this fire was much more terrible than the first, inasmuch as it cost the lives of twenty persons, including three Franciscan monks. This did not prevent the jokers from saying: "The Opera is on fire, egad, so much the better, it has been there so long." As in 1763, the artists were notified that their salaries would be paid during the recess, with the condition that they were not to leave Paris; on the 14th of August,













the Opera took temporary possession of the little house of the Menus-Plaisirs du Roi and opened with *Le Devin du Village* and *Myrtil et Licoris*.

The Queen had at once pronounced in favour of the rapid rebuilding of the theatre, so that the Opera should not be idle during the coming winter, and it was decided to construct a big temporary house; but the site was somewhat difficult to fix upon. The Duke de Chartres went busily to work, making most advantageous proposals for keeping the Opera at the Palais-Royal, but after a whole month spent in reports, counter-reports, enquiries, counter-enquiries, etc., after mention had been made of a bit of land near the Coliseum, of the big quadrangle of the Louvre, of the garden of the Infanta, it was decided, on the advice of La Ferté, to adopt the site of the old City Magazine, alongside the Porte-Saint-Martin. On the 21st of July, Lenoir, the architect, contracted, under a penalty of forfeiting twenty-four thousand *livres*, to hand over the house, finished, by the 30th of October, and the Queen, to stimulate his zeal, promised him the ribbon of Saint Michael, if he was ready on the date fixed. Ready he was, by accomplishing prodigies of activity, and the opening of the theatre took place with a performance offered *gratis* to the people in honour of the birth of the Dauphin. Thus was inaugurated with *Adèle de Ponthieu*, by Razins de Saint-Marc, set to new music by Piccinni, a house which the architect only guaranteed for thirty years, and which would perhaps be standing still had it not been for the incendiary fires of 1871. The appearance of the exterior of the building was exactly the same as that of the Porte-Saint-Martin Theatre before the Commune; but the interior arrangements were entirely different. These were very like those of the second Palais-Royal house, and there were still retained on the first and second tiers, the balcony places so sought after by the pink of the fashionable world.

The rentals of the boxes brought in at that time close on five hundred thousand *livres*; they were all let by the year, and it was not until after the emigration that theatrical managers undertook to let a box for a single evening; but they had nearly always four different renters, that is to say the letting was for one performance out of four. Thus the first-tier box number 8, to cite only one, was let to M. Foucault, the

Prince of Monaco, Delahaye the financier, and the Marquis de Spinola; they paid nine hundred *livres* each. Other subscribers rented the whole or half, that is to say, for four or two performances. The Duke d'Orléans and the Duke de Choiseul shared between them the intercolumnar boxes on the ground-tier, King's side, paying three thousand *livres* each; the Prince de Conti was the sole occupant of the *timbale* (i. e. *baignoire*) number 5, with six seats, for the trifle of four thousand *livres*, and MM. d'Aligre and de Beaujon, one first President of the Parliament, the other equally well-known both as financier and philanthropist, occupied in turn number 4 *timbale*, with four places, and paid twelve hundred and fifty *livres* each. The Count de Choiseul-Stainville, Marshal of France, and father of the famous minister, had also an entire *timbale* to himself. This Marshal, like nearly every other great noble, had a wife and a mistress at once; and both of these betrayed him with the irresistible Clairval. The latter, not a little uneasy in this position, consulted his comrade Caillard: "M. de Stainville threatens me with a hundred thwacks if I go near his wife; Madame promises me two hundred if I do not come at her call. What am I to do?"—"Obey the wife," answers Caillard, "and you will be a hundred per cent to the good."

About 1785 there were about three hundred free admissions to the Opera, either obligatory ones for the ex-aldermen, for authors who had had pieces performed at the Opera, for retired actors drawing a State pension, for functionaries of the Royal household, for officers of the military guard, etc., or optional ones granted to private individuals and liable to be withdrawn at any time. In this category special mention must be made of the journalists, several of whom had only a free pass for the two or three first performances, and who were nearly all required to sit in the amphitheatre, so as to be more closely observed.

Around them would be Dhémery, inspector of the Library, and the Abbé Nolin, director of the Royal Nursery-Gardens; Chalgrin, the architect, or Caffieri, the sculptor; Mademoiselle Coupée or Madame Veuve Berton, Vernet, the painter, or Le Pot d'Auteuil the notary, the elder Lepautre, in acknowledgment of the clock he had offered to the Opera, or Cloys, gate-keeper of the Louvre!

It was not enough for this motley, inflammable public to applaud, in order to express the degree of pleasure an opera gave them. They testified to it by their clothes, as well. And just as, in the seventeenth century, the exquisites had adopted, under the name of *chaconne*, the long ribbon loosely tied round the neck and falling over the chest, that Pécourt had put on one day to dance the *chaconne* in *Thésée*, just as the Court dancers had, under the name of *Amadis* sleeves, imitated the long Persian sleeves with which Marthe Le Rochois sought to hide her arms a little in *Amadis*; so the fine ladies, under Louis XV, would hear of nothing but of being shod and dressed and having their hair done *à la* Camargo. In 1771, they were all set on having dresses like the Guimard's, bunched up over skirts of a different colour, with garlands and rosettes like those the famous dancer wore in the ballet of *Jason et Médée*; then, later on, when the fashion of enormous buttons came in for men's coats, the whim seized certain melomaniacs of having painted on their coat-buttons or embroidered on their waistcoats, instead of the usual rustic love subjects or miniature hunting sketches, the principal scenes of *Castor et Pollux*, *Armide* or *Didon*, so that every one could tell at a glance to what sort of music these amateurs were devoted.

In the midst of all this fashionable world was the pit, still unseated, constituting itself a sort of grand justiciary, keeping itself in direct communication with the princely occupants of the boxes, marking its sympathy or its disapprobation by bravos or murmurs whenever an actor came on the stage, a great noble into his box, or a gay woman took her place in the balcony.

What a fever of enthusiasm at the first performance of the *Danaïdes*, about welcoming the Queen, then the idol of the Parisians, and the Bailly de Suffren, on his first appearance at the play after his campaign in the Indian seas! And what an explosion of hisses and bravos when Auguste Vestris, after a prudent retirement, contrives to make a clever re-entry by dancing the performance to a close! There is a shout of : *à genoux*, to compel him to ask pardon for an old offence against the public; then his father, superbly attired, advances to the foot-lights and says : "You want my son to go down on his knees; I



don't deny that he may have incurred your displeasure, but let me beg you to remember that the dancer you have so often applauded has not studied the posture you demand of him; be assured he would fall into it clumsily and so destroy one of your pleasures by discrediting himself in your sight."—"But let him say something to excuse himself, at any rate!" shouts a voice—"He shall both speak and excuse himself," answers the artful Vestris, and, turning to his son: "Dance, Auguste." Auguste sets off dancing, and the applause nearly brings the house down.

The Opera was the favourite entertainment of Marie-Antoinette. She went there for the operas of Gluck, of whom she was an unfailing patron; for those of Sacchini, whose defence she had undertaken single-handed against intrigues originating within the theatre itself; for those of Salieri, whom she supported on account of Gluck backing up his pupil; for those of Grétry, whose daughter was her own godchild. When she saw her in the theatre she used to give the girl a little friendly nod that sent the whole house wild with delight. Among Court personages the most assiduous frequenter of the Opera was the brisk, gay, and petulant Count d'Artois, but he came for very different reasons from the Queen's. It seemed part of his destiny to be in perpetual rivalry with some dancer, especially with the lively Nivelon. When Noverre brings out pretty Mademoiselle Gondolié, in whom he takes a tender interest, up comes the Count d'Artois to bestow a brilliant equipage upon the new comer. The Count may fancy himself sure of Mademoiselle Michelot, whom he has covered with diamonds; but a quarrel breaks out between the latter and her comrade Cécile, who scratches her face because the gentle Nivelon, wholly absorbed by his passion for the Michelot, remains proof against the advances of Cécile. A few days later, the irascible Cécile refuses to dance because she has not so becoming a costume as the Guimard; for form's sake she is duly sent to prison, but the Prince de Conti looks after her and secures her release.

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Who were the composers most brilliantly associated with this Porte-Saint-Martin house, where the Opera was to remain until after the fall

of the Monarchy? Piccinni, Sacchini, Salieri. The revolution effected by Gluck had killed all the earlier works, but it had also borne its fruit, and the very men who, by their origin and artistic traditions, ought to have come forward as rivals of the master, not only lacked the strength to measure themselves against him, but grew greater by contact with his genius, and only wrote their masterpieces after having frequented the French Opera and undergone the sovereign influence of Gluck. Piccinni, whom the Dubarry had brought from Italy that she might establish a musical party opposed to the Dauphine's, Piccinni, after vainly trying to come into line with *Roland*, then with *Atys*, only succeeded in fully revealing his genius with *Didon*, which is the work, not of a rival, but of an admirer assimilating all he can of the style and declamation of the author of *Orphée*, in order to reach his level.

So Sacchini, who had earned applause by nothing beyond a happy gift of melody in his operas transcribed from the Italian, *Renaud* and *Chimène*, shews in *Dardanus* that he has gone through a transforming process, and acquires unexpected amplitude of melody and power of expression in *Œdipe à Colone*, the opera he leaves behind as supreme evidence of the changes that had been wrought in his thorough Italian nature by contact with Gluck. Lastly, Salieri, the ablest of the imitators of the author of *Armide*, shews at once what composer he seeks to advertise himself by, and to take as a chosen model at the close of his career, by having performed under Gluck's name—for pecuniary reasons—his admirable lyric tragedy of the *Danaïdes*, which was not, indeed, unworthy of such a godfather, the result being that every one was caught and that, for nearly a month, Salieri was enthusiastically applauded under cover of his master. Even the second-rate composers of this epoch, Vogel, the author of *Démophon*, Lemoyne, the author of *Phèdre*, Cherubini, making a start about that time with a *Démophon*, one a German, the second a Frenchman, the third an Italian, try to cast their dissimilar natures in one and the same mould by appropriating the noble declamation and the superb accent of Gluck.

Lucky composers, to be thus seconded by an excellent *troupe* and by an unrivalled lyric tragedian, trained in the school of Gluck, although

she came too late to create any one of his operas, but he had guessed what was in her and had promised her a great future, simply from seeing her hold the humble part of a confidant in *Armide*. Every character entrusted to the Saint-Huberty became a creation of a high order, and one indelibly graven on the minds of her audience, a statement not more applicable to the characters she was the first to portray, such as Ariadne and Dido, Penelope and Hypermnestra, than to those she repeated after others, like Angelica, Armida, Sangarida and all the heroines of Gluck, wherein she easily eclipsed her most famous predecessors. There was no resisting the incontestable evidence as to her talent, and an exceptional situation had to be arranged for the artist who was the sole hope of an institution weakened by the retirement of Mademoiselle Laguerre and the decline of Mademoiselle Levasseur. Thus it befell that, as soon as she found herself mistress at the Opera, she soon made up for her past days of humiliation and distress by displaying out-of-the-way whims, trying to have the upper hand in everything, fomenting revolt, along with the Guimard and the artists on the committee, against Dauvergne, the manager, and Papillon de la Ferté, the Superintendent of the Menus-Plaisirs, who was the representative at the Opera of the minister of the King's Household, in other words of the Royal authority. This born artist had not been very richly gifted with natural charms and, at the time of her first appearance, had been considered "very ugly, quite incompetent, and entirely incapable of continuing on the boards." At what cost of sheer hard work she had managed to train, reform, and in the end raise herself to the highest plane of lyric art, she alone knew, and amply she determined to be paid.

But there is no artist, however great, for whom it is impossible to find a rival. That was what the astute La Ferté did, with all the more pleasure that in so doing he would not only be taking a rise out of the Saint-Huberty but be promoting his own mistress, Mademoiselle Maillard, whom the Opera had in the exercise of its power selected from the Petits-Comédiens Theatre in the Bois de Boulogne. And the great tragic artist felt the attack so keenly that, after surrendering the part of Ariadne, she made a fearful outcry and set the whole lyric world by the









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ears when they wanted the new comer to be allowed to appropriate her favourite part of Dido, in which she was incomparable. The minister's bidding had nevertheless, to be complied with, but the spiteful artist avenged herself by simulating an attack of indisposition which prevented her from playing Chimène, and as, by way of climax to all this, Mademoiselle Maillard had a fall and was unable to sing, the management found itself caught between two accidents, one feigned, the other real.

Despite the tenacious opposition of the Saint-Huberty, Mademoiselle Maillard, with her fine voice and her lively histrionic method, was none the less fated to succeed her, and to hold the first rank in the Opera during the whole revolutionary period and until the advent of Madame Branchu. Thus La Ferté had not made a bad choice.

And what excellent artists were grouped around these two great heroines of tragedy! Lainez first of all, once a market-gardener's boy, discovered by Berton as he was one day crying his vegetables in the street, Lainez who had already made some mark as Legros' understudy, but whose success was not firmly established until after the departure of the latter. His best part was perhaps that of Æneas, alongside Madame Saint-Huberty's Dido; a singer of the first order, but an incorrigible gambler and a violent withal. Rousseau next, the contralto with the charming voice who shone in high tenor parts, whereas Lainez had less facility in the upper register than his predecessor Legros; Rousseau, gentle by nature, but a prey to evil counsellors. Lastly, the two singers who shared the place left behind by Larrivée; Laïs, the high baritone, with a powerful voice, who made a great success in Panurge, a man of intelligence but ridiculously vain, and Chéron, with an admirable organ for serious music, an incomparable Œdipus, and the creator at the Opera of *basso profundo* singing, a richly endowed artist but a terribly lazy one. With these were Mademoiselle Dozon, afterwards Madame Chéron, whose expressive voice was very touching in pathetic parts, in Antigone or Evelina, and who soon became as lazy as her husband; Mademoiselle Buret, very anxious to make herself useful, with a fine voice, a style of her own and an overplump person; Mademoiselle Gavaudan the younger, charming in *soubrettes* or young princesses, but very dissipated, and Mademoiselle Hus, a very

pretty woman, with a rich but overtaxed voice; the two last were great friends of the Saint-Huberty, who took much trouble with them and was anxious to secure them as her partisans.

What first-rate choregraphic artists, too! You had first a ballet-master with ideas and inventiveness, the elder Gardel, who had often



ETIENNE LAINEZ

*Rôle de Rodrigue dans l'opéra de Chimène*

plotted with Dauberval to turn out Noverre and, in his turn, had turned out his ally, formerly a very fine dancer, the one, who, it will be remembered, had abandoned the use of the mask, the popular author of *La Chercheuse d'esprit*, *Ninette à la Cour*, *La Rosière*, *Le Premier Navi-gateur*, etc.; next came his younger brother, destined to succeed him as ballet-master in 1787, while retaining his line as first "heavy lead," a dancer with a style of his own, and that an ultra-correct one; then Nivelon, the popular and light-hearted fellow, an universal favourite with the sex; lastly, the whirling, dazzling, astonishing Auguste Vestris, the human embodiment of choregraphic art, as heavy in mind as he was lively in movement, and of a self-sufficiency equalled only by his stupidity. How the English laughed at him, even while applauding him, when he paid them a visit, and how well he is represented in a certain print of Bartolozzi's, published in London at the time of one of his English trips, in all the pride of his triumphant vanity, perched a-tiptoe on one leg, between two geese, with the following letterpress borrowed from Plutarch, and translated into English for the benefit of readers ignorant of Greek :

"A stranger at Sparta, standing long upon one leg, said to a Lacede-



monian : 'I do not believe you can do as much.' 'True,' said he, 'but every goose can.'

On the "spindle side," Mademoiselle Perlin, though really beyond her work, kept putting off her retirement, and stuck to her post, thanks in great measure to the interest of her great friends, Guimard and Saint-Huberty; but what a pretty and captivating front rank was that formed by Mesdemoiselles Dorival and Dorlé, Gervais and Dupré. The first was certainly a very hot-headed creature, and too fond of the bottle; she played the manager, too, very scurvy tricks, and would fall a-brawling, on the open stage, with the worthy Vestris; no sort of discipline would she observe, or shew respect for any one; but what success was her's, whenever she tripped down to the foot-lights, and how little the public cared about her many failings! The second, with more docility and less talent, occupied a very honourable place, where she was maintained by the favour of M. de Vouigny; the third excelled in comic ballet, and shirked no

amount of work; the fourth, who had been summoned back from Naples to take Mademoiselle Théodore's place, and had become very popular, could never induce herself to dance without her master, Gallet, with whom she had originally come out. And when the latter, not being wanted, had been discharged, she had only one thought—to get leave to go and join him in Italy; she went, never to return.



M. GARDEL le Jeune,  
de l'Académie Royale de Musique.

With such a battalion of pretty women, it was always very difficult to keep order behind the scenes, and all the regulations in the world were of no avail, even though backed up by numbers of French Guards. Certain frequenters of the Opera grumbled at this want of discipline, but only such as got no profit out of it, not having admittance behind the curtain, and it must have been a spectator of this class who made the following complaint to the authorities :

"The administration, influenced by a highly laudable zeal, have been wisely explicit in one of the articles of the regulations concerning the discipline of the theatre, forbidding the artists ever to shew themselves to the public by coming beyond the side-scenes, even when in their stage costumes, and still less when in ordinary dress; the reason for this prohibition is based upon the necessity for keeping up the illusion of the performance, and making it appear just like life to the spectators; but how is this article of the regulations observed in the present day? There is not a moment during the performance of an opera, at which you may not see a number of people in the wings, coming so far forward as to be easily distinguished and recognized; you see women in black capes, others in dressing-gowns, advancing with effrontery, and making signs and gestures to one side of the theatre or the other; you see men in green or red coats, others in white jackets, lolling and joking at the very edge of the wings; others, farther off, and in the same attire, dance and seem to be trying who shall jump the highest. And when does all this occur? Just when there are two interlocutors on the stage, and in the most interesting passages. If you can see all these puppets at their tricks from the centre of the house, all the more are they visible from the sides."

And the managing committee of the artists of the Opera, held it prudent to take this rude complaint seriously, and to confirm the regulation afresh, instead of paying no heed to this self-constituted guardian of decency and good form!

\* \* \*

And Mademoiselle Guimard was still dancing in the ballet! "This lady has had an unprecedented period of service since 1761," wrote









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By THOMAS NICHOLSON, Market Lane

*A Stranger at Sparta standing long upon one Leg, said to a Lacedaemonian,  
I do not believe you can do as much; "True" (said he) but every Goose can.*

*See Plutarch's Lives of the Spartans Vol. I. Page 466*





Dauvergne in 1788. "It would be a great pity for the public and for the Academy as well, if ill-advised measures should cost her the loss of the great consideration due to her long services!" She still tripped about with such a lightsome toe, that an opera-goer, an exceptionally well-informed person, apparently, cried out in admiration: "Really she doesn't grow any older, anywhere!" And as she was dancing one day between Vestris and Gardel: "It reminds me," whispered a wag, "of two dogs quarrelling over a bone." She was a way the high priestess of gallantry in that period, and no important decision could ever be arrived at in this line without her advice being first asked for. Was it not she and Mademoiselle Heynel who paid a visit, on behalf of their "sister-artists" at the Opera, to their worthy protector, M. de Vouigny, when the latter, a great lady-killer and the darling of the green-rooms, was groaning on a sick bed, after breaking his leg by falling into an open grave? Two years before, certain young "bloodes" of the Court, among them the Count d'Artois and the Duke de Chartres, had conceived the idea of giving, at a subscription price of five *louis* a head, a banquet and a performance to which the most famous courtezans in Paris were to be invited; to the Dervieux fell the task of making arrangements for the feast at a fashionable tavern, and, for the performance, the Guimard had naturally proposed her own theatre, where the Duthé, the Count d'Artois' flame, should come and sing *La Colonie*, and *Les Sabots*. But on the date appointed comes a Royal order, at the instance of the Archbishop of Paris, to prohibit the whole affair. Thereupon Mesdemoiselles Dervieux and Guimard, the ringleaders of the band, hit upon the happy thought of sending the feast to the Curé of Saint-Roch, begging him to distribute it among the sick and poor of his parish; a dinner wittily dubbed: the Dinner of the Knights of Saint-Louis (*cinq louis*).

And Sophie Arnould was still to the fore with her smart sallies. She was no longer, however, on the stage; but in the amphitheatre, where she profited by her right of entry in company with old comrades in retirement like herself, Jéliotte and Chassé, Laval and Lany, Mesdemoiselles Chevalier, Lemaure and Fel, Madame Larrivée, and the Beaumesnil. One day that she caught sight of a bevy of ballet-girls ranged

in a row, who had adopted the names of flowers : Rose, Hyacinth, Amaranth, Eglantine : "What a *plate-bande!*" she muttered. And on seeing the Duchâteau, the Châteauneuf, the Beauchâteau, and the Châteaudevieux appear together : "All these *châteaux* threaten to come down, a lot of very shaky *châteaux*." The singers of the close of the century certainly preferred to see her in the house than by their side, so dangerous was she on the stage, by her efforts to tempt them to laughter in the most pathetic passages. She it was, who, falling fainting with a sigh into the arms of a despairing lover, suddenly whispered into his ear : "Oh! Pillot, how ugly you are!" And in *Iphigénie en Aulide*, at the moment when the horn takes up the refrain, *ré mi do, ré mi do*, after the lovely chorus *Rassurez-vous, belle princesse, Achille sera votre époux*, she used to amuse herself by answering her comrades, in unison with the horn : "*Je m'en f—, je m'en f—*" "Louder! louder!" shouted the spectators, who had got wind of the joke, and one evening, whether from inattention, or a sudden freak, she rapped out the oath in question, and set the whole house in a roar.

But all these follies were drawing to an end. The very day that a certain Mademoiselle Rousselois, who had made a name for herself in the provinces, obtained the honour of a first appearance in Paris, and attained some measure of success as Clytemnestra, in *Iphigénie en Aulide*, the people managed to burn Reveillon's house, in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine; this was in the month of April, 1789. And the Opera, which reckoned among its staff so many discontented spirits, so many hot-headed people with great difficulty kept in order by a management becoming more feeble every day, at once felt the impulse of this, the first popular demonstration; while the takings diminish, the wild spirits get wilder. The artists, who were looking for their enfranchisement from the Paris Municipality, had made a regular butt of Dauvergne, the manager, and tired out the patience of two or three ministers of the King's Household, Amelot, the Baron de Breteuil, and M. Laurent de Villedeuil. Their insubordination and complaints had so increased that, for three years, from 1782 to 1785, Dauvergne in a fit of exasperation had given way, and left them to govern themselves in a sort of republic; after which,









LE PEUPLE FAISANT FERMER L'OPERA.

le 12 Juillet 189.





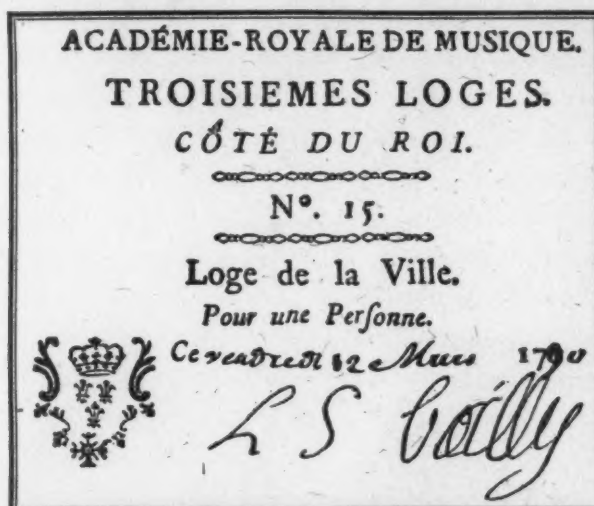
things going from bad to worse, he had returned to put his neck again under the yoke. Placed between the Royal authority, represented by the Superintendent of the Menus-Plaisirs, and the popular power incarnated in the Paris Municipality, the manager did not know to which to incline, and dared not do anything.

How was any authority to be exercised over subjects in a perpetual state of revolt, who used to assemble in the hall of the Panthéon, or elsewhere, to censure the acts of their superiors, who addressed memorials to the district councils, praying to be delivered from an unbearable yoke, and to be constituted a self-governing body, who put forth new pretensions every day, and, when they did not at once obtain satisfaction, would send their citizen friends to make a diversion in the pit in their favour? It looked as though they wanted to realise at all costs the wish of Collé, who, however, had never had cause to complain of the great people about the Court : "When shall we be delivered from the tyranny of the gentlemen of the Chamber, their despotism over the theatres, their bad taste, their ignorance, their libertinage with the actresses, which makes them grant everything to the women, for the sake of the women, on account of the women?" This indignation, finding vent in this underhand, secret fashion, came queerly from the favourite of the Duke d'Orleans, from the purveyor-in-chief of licentious pieces to the theatre of Madame de Montesson.

What steps did the artists take to get rid of Dauvergne? They just treated him as a spy and abused him so grossly that, sick of their insults, he gave formal intimation to the minister of his intention to retire ; he stuck to his post, however, for another year at the instance of his superior and directed the Opera very skilfully during the whole of the year 1789, when the performances were often suspended, and the receipts reduced to nothing, at one time on account of Necker's dismissal, at another owing to the capture of the Bastille, or to the murder of Berthier and Foulon.

The final catastrophe is approaching, and events are crowding thickly ; at the Opera, as elsewhere, men's minds are in a state of ferment, and the political disorganisation extends to the vast machine of the Academy of Music, which was with great difficulty kept going, in the midst of the general insubordination and strikes.

But why talk of the Royal Academy of Music? On the day after the return from Varennes, the 21st of June, 1791, for this unpleasing title is substituted that of Opera; then, a few days after, on the 16th of September, a decree of the Committee of Public Safety restores the old name, out of courtesy to Louis XVI, who had just signed the Constitution. Four days later, on Tuesday the 20th, the King, Queen, and all the Royal Family went to the Opera for the last time; they played *Castor et Pollux*, of which the people, the real sovereign, had witnessed a free performance the night before, in honour of the Constitution. This



Fac-simile of an order for a box at the Royal Academy of Music, signed by Bailly.

evening, thanks to the large number of royalists scattered about the house, the audience gives Marie-Antoinette a last illusion of happiness; unchecked applause gives emphasis to certain verses applicable to the Queen, and the latter, delighted, says to the ladies in her company :

"After all, you see, our good people only ask to be allowed to love us."

The next day she was insulted at the Opéra-Comique; a salutation addressed by Madame Dugazon to the Queen, before singing in the duet in the *Événements Imprévus* : "*Ah! combien j'aime ma maîtresse!*" had sufficed to set the house on fire. The pit cries : "*Plus de maîtresse, plus de maître! Vive la liberté!*" The boxes retort : "*Vive le Roi! Vive la Reine.*" Challenges are exchanged, they fall to blows, and Marie-

Antoinette, escaping while the riot is at its height, drives off in her carriage at full gallop, while the crowd pelts her with mud, and pursues her with repeated shouts of : "*A bas la Reine, à bas !*"

Twelve days later, on the 16th of October, 1791, the title of National Opera was finally re-established; the old order was at its last gasp, though the King was still alive. Already, in the last eighteen months, the place had ceased to be the Royal Academy; the Paris Municipality had taken over entire control of the theatre on the 8th of April, 1790. Dauvergne thought himself only too lucky to resign his managerial functions, and the Municipality, in response to the wishes of the artists, let them govern themselves through a committee formed of the principal performers, delegates from the choruses, orchestra, etc. Only, in place of the manager, the superintendent of the Menus-Plaisirs, and the minister, all these representing the Royal authority, the city appointed four municipal commissioners named Henriot, Leroux, Chaumette, Hébert, who soon restored their charges to discipline.

It was the end of the Monarchy, the establishment of the Republic at the Opera.

ADOLPHE JULLIEN.







## THE ABRUZZI

Do you remember, ladies, our mountain journey, and that long sojourn beyond the limits of civilization, when you were your friends' dauntless companions?

One evening at Rome, as winter was drawing to a close, it suddenly occurred to you that you would see the Abruzzi, the wild heart of the Apennines where railways as yet were not, nor always inns; where, indeed, to this day, travellers rarely venture. You loved the hidden nooks of the too-much-travelled country, the obscure towns overlooked by tourists, the untrodden paths which lead to unexpected points of view, original and characteristic customs, or inglorious works of art. It was in the Abruzzi that you gathered your last, and, to my mind, your most precious harvest. So I am sure of your attention if I ask it while, for a few moments, I recall that wild tract, with its broad horizons where man still preserves the simplicity of primitive customs and the beauty of an uncontaminated race.

Livy has given us the ancient history of the Abruzzi. It is the land of the Marsi, the Peligni, the Samnites—all the heroic tribes which so long held in check the growing power of Rome. In the very heart of the hills, between Avezzano and Solmona, we still find the ruins of Corfinium which, during the Social War, was the capital of the Italian confederation that bound itself to oppose the common enemy. At a later date, notwithstanding the near vicinity of the Marches and of Umbria, the Abruzzi became historically dependent on Naples, and their fortunes have for centuries run parallel. The Abruzzi have been in turn under the dominion of the Normans, the Swabians, the Angevins and the Aragonese, and have been the battle-field of *condottieri* and of conflicting dynasties. The larger fiefs of the land have always been held under the crown of Naples, and the nobility has been distinguished in administration and in arms. To name only two instances: the home of the Marquises of Pescara is a town on the seaboard of the Abruzzi, and from them sprang the conqueror of Pavia for Charles V and the husband whom Vittoria Colonna never ceased to mourn, while, hard by, is Atri, whence the family of Acquaviva takes the title of Duke. Andrea d'Acquaviva is famous as having enrolled himself in the service of Charles VIII and valiantly taken the side of the French in the struggle for the throne of Naples, while he was at the same time so devoted to letters at that epoch of renaissance, that he set up a printing-press in his palace.

The castles of the feudal lords of the country are still to be seen perched here and there on the heights, in the midst of roughly whitewashed hamlets. They are jagged and moss-grown ruins, abandoned on a solitary cliff, or, more often, peaceful farms, where, on walled terraces, cypress trees lift their dark spires. Some of the towns still remain important memorials of the middle ages; Aquila, for instance, built by the Emperor Frederick II like an eagle's eyrie among the rocks, whence he could swoop down on the Papal States; and Solmona, at the foot of Monte Majella, a town famous in remote antiquity. It was the birthplace of Ovid, who sings of its cool waters:

Sulmo mihi patria est gelidi uberrimus undis.

A less known and less visited spot is the little town of Tagliacozzo, ensconced in a ravine under the towering shelter of beautiful Monte Velino. On each side of the High street there are several little palaces of the time



of the Renaissance, bearing witness to past prosperity. Great memories are associated with this obscure township.

Certain great abbeys, which survive though fallen from their high estate, testify to the power of monarchy in these parts; San Giovanni in Venere, San Clemente in Casauria, with its twelfth-century basilica, and above all, the famous monastery of Monte Majella where the order of the Celestines first arose, a reformed offshoot of the great Benedictine family.

From the Middle Ages down to our own day the inhabitants of these highlands have hardly ever known the meaning of peace and safety. After the great wars the country was the scene first of clan feuds, and then of brigandage. The national character, as developed in so stern a school, is at once savage and heroic. The mountaineers offered a determined resistance to the triumph of the Piedmontese monarchy, and the struggle can hardly be regarded as civil war, so marked are the differences of race and feeling on the two sides. But now, for nearly thirty years, the Abruzzi form part of the kingdom of Italy. The government has absorbed them gradually, by means of railways, schools, centralisation and *lotto*. Nevertheless, the process of mingling the race with other Italian blood is more difficult here than elsewhere. The old province, which has never known political independence, furnishes the king with tractable soldiers, and never dreams of rebellion, but assimilation goes on slowly in the rock-bound gorges. The people seem to cling to the habit of ages, of refusing to know the unseen master who rules them.

The spirit of resistance is kept alive in some parts by an instinct of fidelity to time-honoured traditions. As an instance the following reminiscence throws a curious light on the state of opinion in the country districts of Naples. One evening we were riding down a torrent path among the mountains. It was growing dusk, and in the lonely valley, where the smoke of distant farmsteads rose into the air, we made our guide sing for us. He was a townsman of about forty; the echoes answered his fine bass voice as he gave us various love songs, the best popular poetry of the country. Then he was asked to sing Garibaldi's hymn, of which we did not know the words. His face expressed the greatest terror; he shook his head, and suddenly bending forward on his horse, imitated the gesture of a rifleman taking aim.



Then, to explain this little drama, he said : "I can tell you, Signori, if I were to sing that infernal song, twenty guns would be pointed at me from among the brushwood, and I should never get to my journey's end."

This district is destined to be a resort for the Neapolitan holiday-makers, who will find their trips made easy by the new railroads. But as yet, except the central towns and those on the way to Fucino, the province is not ready to receive visitors. They run the risk of serious discomfort if they turn off from the main roads. We arrived one night-fall at a small town, once a fortress, enclosed within walls and a moat, where the gate is still guarded by an outwork of brick. Our vehicle draws up at the only inn; there is but one bedroom with two beds; a small allowance for seven travellers, three of whom are ladies. The ladies, indeed, are in dismay; not so the mistress of the house; she explains by signs, her Italian being somewhat unintelligible, that these ladies can have her own room, and her own bed, which is large and in which three can quite well sleep. Three in a bed! For the first time we regret the civilization we have turned our backs on.

On leaving, another difficulty arose. The landlady refused to be paid in gold. As she had never seen anything but paper money she looked with suspicion on our gold pieces. She consulted all the magnates of the place, at last even the priest, and ecclesiastical authority had to pronounce in our favour before we could get away.

The dirt of these villages is beyond all belief. We can never forget the impression made on us by Carsoli, the first post-town in the Abruzzi after leaving the States of the Church. We slept in a squalid inn, where we felt, on the very threshold, that now we were in Naples. There were none but camp-beds, with sheets like sail-cloth. The rooms were small, low, paved with brick, crammed with sacks and agricultural tools. Rats played at large in the empty cupboards, and their presence—and other causes—prohibited sleep. Next morning on opening the window to the front, we saw, in possession of the square, which was littered with straw and filth, above a hundred little black pigs with no swineherd, sniffing and grunting at the house doors. We had quite a pitched battle with these brutes to make our way to our mules.

But those who are bold enough to face doubtful quarters and bad food,

will find a journey in the Abruzzi one of the most interesting in all Italy for the lover of scenery. The mountains afford a succession of varied landscapes; first, wide green valleys with abundant waters, and cultivated or wooded slopes; the upper Liris is the loveliest of these dales. The highlands are different in character; alpine, bare and sublime. The chief groups lie surrounding three lofty peaks, the Gran' Sasso d'Italia, the highest point of the Apennines, Monte Majella, and Monte Velino. From these three summits the eye is free to range over the whole of central Italy to the Adriatic, and in clear weather the sparkling horizon of the Mediterranean is visible in the west.

The higher peaks can only be reached in summer time, after the snows have melted. In bad weather they are quite inaccessible, and there are vast elevated plateaux which cannot be crossed for many months in the year. And yet a winter journey in the Abruzzi is a thing to be recommended, for this southern range has a quite peculiar charm at that season. We travelled through all the accessible country towards the end of February. The snow was low on the hills; the passes were obstructed, and the post was carried on mules. Nevertheless it was very hot; the sun blinded our eyes and scorched our shoulders. In front of us Monte Velino lifted its head in the distance, solitary as Mont Blanc is solitary, its robe of snow tinted with rosy reflections. The heated atmosphere, the dazzling whiteness of the snow in the ravines, the very outline of the peaks and surrounding range deluded us with the impression of a summer excursion in the Alps.

The sea-board is a fresh surprise. The scenery of the Adriatic is peaceful and smiling, the shore is indented by the outflow of numerous little rivers, and the hills slope gently to the sea. We see villages perched on low ridges, embowered in olive and vine; residences of a better class lie scattered here and there, white among the groves of chestnut. This country-side is characterised by regular, easy undulations, which appeal to the feelings like the hill and dale of Tuscany. It is good to rest in,—good to stretch oneself in the shade during the hot midday hours, when the field crickets are chirping their sharp tune in the flood of light; we hear the song of the women and children on the beach, drawing in the nets, and now and again the shriek of the express train to Brindisi as it flies along the shore. Our eyes follow the sails of the little scudding fleet of fishing-boats, and we fancy we see



the trail of smoke left by the Austrian Lloyd's packet as it passes in the far, far distance, southwards from Ancona.

Set in the midst of this splendid scenery is a high-spirited and powerful race, which has preserved, more exclusively than any other Italian tribe, its ancient manners, superstitions and customs. Some of these customs have come down from the remotest antiquity, and their origin must be sought in the highlands of Asia, the cradle of the European nations. Others are more obviously a heritage from classical paganism. Others, again, are the outcome of Christian traditions fired by ardent faith and a vivid imagination. Some are common to all the province, while others are peculiar to one valley or even one parish, and not known in the adjoining parish. The student could compare them, classify and explain them, but no time should be lost in describing them, for civilization is already encroaching on the territory she so long held aloof from, and is making rapid progress at the cost of local individuality.

Costume will not be so swiftly superseded. The women of the hill-country cling persistently to the garb of their mothers, and will allow no change in the smallest detail. Would a lady reader like to have a description of the dress of the women of Scanno? Shoes with silver buckles; a dark green stuff petticoat in broad pleats, with a crimson belt—devised by some instinctive Veronese; a coloured apron, fine pleated, and "smocked" with ribbon, fastened by two silver clasps; a blue woollen bodice, separate from the skirt, and buttoned down the front with silver, or sometimes gold, buttons. The wide sleeves are gathered at the shoulder and wrist, and the shift is trimmed with lace which lies white against the dark skin. I must not forget the sharp stiletto, stuck into the belt; I do not know whether it is considered indispensable at Scanno, but in other parts I have seen women who never parted from their weapon. The head-dress is a sort of turban of coloured woollen stuff. Their hair is arranged with elaborate care. The plaits are pinned up on each side at the back of the head, but are first entirely covered with silk or woollen braid—sometimes above fifteen yards of it are used—and wound round till the hair itself is entirely hidden. A very poetical impulse of religious feeling leads them to vary certain details with the course of the ecclesiastical year. During Holy Week, for instance, a



time of mourning in the Christian Church, the braid for the hair is blue or green, so are their jewels and ornaments; when Easter comes the gems, braids, and stuffs are all of the brightest red.

All the care bestowed on their dress by the women is apparently to conquer the men. In fact, the most important occupation of the youth of the Abruzzi is *fare all' amore*—love-making. When a young man has made his choice, custom requires that he should address himself one Sunday, as he comes out of church, to some female friend of the damsel's. The friend does his errand in the evening at the well: "Teresina, do you know? Marcuccio wishes to 'keep company' with you."

"What, with me! Good heavens! And I so ugly!"

The request is granted; the lover has only to find the opportunity for making his offer. She sees him come and sit down by her; her heart throbs under her red bodice, while her fingers nervously twirl the coral beads of her necklace, or play with the trimming of her apron. The lad holds a flower and a stick with a point at the end. Does the stick symbolise marital authority, by the side of the flower which is emblematic of love? He sits talking and digging up the ground at his feet, hoping for a propitious moment for offering the flower; sometimes, if he is very bashful, he sends it later to the fair one's home. This is a song relating to this custom.

"Quest'è quel fiore  
Che te lo manda amore;  
Amore te lo manda  
E te lo raccomanda.  
Ma voi che la prendete  
Che cosa gli direte?

Il fiore è bello  
L'amor è garbato.  
Grazie all' amore,  
E a chi me l'ha recato.  
Ma dicete all' amore  
Ch'i voglio issu e no lo fiore." (1)

Flowers and plants play an important part in love-making. The village girls question them as to whether their lovers are true. There is a leaf which is known to blister the skin, and they press it in their arms saying:

"Amor, se me vo' ben famme 'na rosa;  
Se no, famme 'na piaga vermenoza.

The skin only turns red and the maiden is satisfied. Or, on St. John's eve, she

(1) "This flower Love sends thee; sends it and commends it to thy care. But if you take it what will you say to him?"

"The flower is fair and Love a gallant youth. Thank Love, and him who brought it; but tell Love I want himself and not the flower."











pulls a bunch of nettles which she places in her window or on the terrace in front of the house; all night long she lies awake, and gets up twenty times to look at her nosegay; all the leaves should be limp before daybreak. Happily the nettle droops very quickly; by morning they are all as limp as she can desire; the love-sick girl has no more alarms; he loves her, she is happy. And in other countries has youth any better reason, very often, for cherishing the dreams it feeds on?

The lover has to pay long court to his betrothed, but till spring comes, which is the season for weddings, there are joys for them during the winter. The long evenings bring the women of each village together to sit in the cowsheds, where they work and tell stories. This custom prevails, too, in various mountainous parts of France; for instance in Auvergne. In the Abruzzi the men, too, are admitted, and soon the tambourine is heard; the young folks stand up and dancing goes on for an hour or two. It is the ordinary Tarentella, here known as the *Saltarella*. I should be much surprised if Marcuccio and Teresina did not take sweet advantage of their opportunity.

Then Christmas comes; bells ring, doors are opened wide, and off they go to midnight mass, through the snow. On Christmas Eve the lover is expected to fetch his sweetheart and her mother, torch in hand, to light the way to church.

On New-year's Eve they have another custom. In the mountains where there are no flowers, a lover worthy of the name has, by some means, procured a little bouquet to which he adds a handful of sweet herbs. At ten o'clock he serenades his lady under her window; a guitar, a mandoline and songs. Then he hooks the flowers to the end of a stick and lays them on her window-sill; or, if he has a friend in the household, a thread will be let down to which he ties them, and they are hauled up and very certainly reach her for whom they are intended.

In these cases the young girl, next morning, sends the youth a fine fowl to be eaten with the friends who have helped him to serenade her. Then the whole party come once more on the Eve of the Epiphany to return thanks for the fowl.

When a couple quarrels before marriage, and the girl accepts another lover, the rejected suitor still brings his friends to stand under the window of the faithless maid. They form three parties; one is posted at each end of the street. The jilted lover goes with the musicians; he abuses his former sweetheart



in pretty strong prose, and then sings ironically such verses as these;—

“Tiriturella mia l'hé fatta justa! (1)  
E de lasciamme tu l'he fatte prestu!  
Tu marci cu lu fume, i' cu l'arruste:  
Vedimme la sapore andove 'rresta!  
Cridivi apparentà cu Carle Magne,  
Per esse' na regina de quacche regne.  
Tu sei 'na vellanella de campagna:  
E l'arte tua è d'annà fà' legne,  
La zoca 'ncenta e la 'cceta a la mana.”

Meanwhile the new lover arrives on the scene to put a stop to this satirical serenade. They come to blows; the street is a scene of battle, fisticuffs, and cudgellings; and not unfrequently knives are drawn and blood is shed.

The wedding day comes at last; they are married at church on a Saturday, and all that day the bride is closely kept by her parents. Evening falls, the house is shut up; the bridegroom and his family gather outside and sing to the guitar. You, madam, cannot fail to appreciate this little song;—

“Or non ti puoi chiamar più villanella; (2)  
Sei di sangue reale, bella figlia.  
Il Dio che ti fece così bella  
Alla luna ed al sole ti assomiglia!  
Queste manucce tue meritano anella,  
Queste orecchiucce un paio di fioccaglie,  
Questa goluccia un filo di coraglie,  
E quando vien l'amor l'attacca e scioglie.  
E senti che ti dico, piccirella;  
Fa a detta del cor che non si sbaglia.”

After these songs the door is opened. A pair standing in the dark receives the company; the man embraces all the men as they come in, and the woman

(1) “My turtle dove, you have done a pretty thing! You have been in a hurry to throw me over. You go after the smell, and I after the roast. We shall see which keeps the savour! You must think yourself descended from Charlemagne, and the Queen of some kingdom. You are a peasant wench. Your business is to go and cut wood with the rope round your waist and the knife in your hand.”

(2) This is an Italian version of the dialect; in English it is as follows: “I can no longer call you a peasant girl. You are of royal blood, fair maid. God, who made you so fair, made you like the moon and the sun. Those little hands deserve a ring, those little ears should have earrings, that little throat a string of coral beads. And when Love comes he ties and unties it. And listen to what I tell you, little one; do as your heart bids you, for it does not deceive you!”

kisses all the women; at the top of the stairs they hear shouts of laughter. The man is a woman in disguise, and the woman a man. Then there is an exchange of civilities; *rosolio* is served, and the bride and bridegroom are left to talk to each other.

Next morning, Sunday, the bridegroom's mother and kinsfolk bring the wedding gifts. The neighbours, standing at their doors, see the baskets carried by, all trimmed with silken ribbons and full of women's gear. When she receives them the bride takes off all the clothes she wore before her marriage down to her shoes. She is leaving the home of her childhood. All her personal belongings, dresses and household vessels are loaded on to a mule, and, to crown all, her spindle and distaff. The procession sets forth for the bridegroom's house. The mother, who remains behind, kisses her daughter once more, and as she departs throws a handful of seed-corn after her as a symbol of wealth and motherhood. Musicians head the procession; *confetti* are flung about the street, the village boys hold ribbons across their path to win a few halfpence. The bride and her husband walk apart, each in the midst of a knot of relations.

The bridegroom's mother stands on the threshold with a cake in her hand. She meets her daughter-in-law and touches her on the forehead with the cake and then on the breast and shoulders, signing her with the cross, and says: "Let us love each other, not like cat and dog, but like Christians." The young woman replies suitably to this welcome and enters her new home.

The whole party then assemble in the two rooms which commonly are the whole dwelling-place of these poor people. *Confetti* are handed round, with a sort of light pastry called *ciambelle*, and wine, *rosolio*, and coffee. When all have eaten and drunk, the bride seats herself in the middle to receive the usual gifts. The men give money; the women bring some little ornament in gold, for jewelry is the luxury of every household, and every marriage adds to the portable property of the family.

In the evening they sing *la fiasca*; that is to say as soon as the household has retired to sleep a noisy serenade rouses the street, they sing the charms and the virtues of the bride, and all the blessings they invoke. In acknowledgment of these ill-timed congratulations some one must rise and open the

door, and give the serenaders a *fiasco* or bottle of wine, a slice of cheese, and a cake; then they go away and peace reigns.

On the Monday morning, very early, the bride's mother and godmother arrive to see her bed; they bring an offering of coffee to the young couple. That day they and all the women of the family dine in the bridegroom's house. Each one carries a basket on her head, full of corn and tied with ribbon; on the top is a white loaf with a flower stuck in it. The newly married couple receive them seated near the bed. Each woman places her basket under her left arm, and with her right hand sheds a handful of grain on the bride's head, saying: "Live in peace, in the name of God and the Madonna, and may you grow old together." The mother does it last, but custom does not require that she should say anything. Her heart is to prompt her, and it often inspires her with eloquence.

All through the week the young wife remains at home and receives visits. On the following Sunday she goes out with much ceremony to high mass at church, and then to a solemn dinner at her parents' house. After that she is free, and enjoys all the rights of a married woman.

These rights, to be sure, are but a small boon; she may return the visits she has received and walk about the country alone. In all other respects she is bound to a master, and she knows it. All the chivalrous poetry which hedges in the maiden has evaporated. The married woman does her share of the hardest labour, and the beauty celebrated in serenades is soon faded. Her husband is faithful but exacting; and here, as elsewhere, matrimony often means the sacrifice of the woman. How can I forget a picture I once saw on a high-road of the Abruzzi, and which tells a tale of the condition of the women? A number of families were returning together from a pilgrimage to the Madonna del buon Consiglio, at some days' journey from their village. The men went first, in high spirits, with feathers in their hats, and mounted on capital mules; the women followed on foot, holding the children by the hand, all the provisions for the journey on their heads; poor, weary creatures, tired out and crushed by their loads!

Some of the customs of the country are strangely whimsical; for instance that of throwing the pothook out of window on stormy days, when thunder is growling among the heights. Some are very pleasing, such as the pilgrimage



of little girls—*verginelle*—sent forth, seven or twelve of them, to pray at some famous sanctuary for the recovery of a sick person. Some again are touching; for example, the meal laid out in every house for the dead on a day of commemoration, and which is never touched by any one, but distributed to the poor; and the sending, on Palm Sunday, of a branch of olive blessed by the priest to an enemy who is forgiven. But the spirit of the race is most plainly revealed in public festivals—its eager imagination, emotional sensitiveness, and love of symbolism and of all that appeals to the senses. The ceremonies of Holy Week, with the pictures of the Stations of the Passion, the procession of the Cross, the Pharisees dressed as soldiers, and so forth, are not remarkably different to what may yet be seen in various parts of the Roman Catholic world. But the processions of Corpus Christi present certain curious peculiarities. At Scanno, for instance, may still be seen, if not precisely the "Mysteries" of the Middle Ages, at any rate *tableaux vivants*. At each station where the procession of the Sacrament is to halt, a platform is erected, and decorated with rustic gaudiness. They are occupied by volunteer actors who, as the procession comes near, assume attitudes representing some scene from the Old or New Testament. If it is the sacrifice of Isaac, a little naked urchin kneels on a pile of wood, while a bearded old man brandishes a knife over him; close at hand lurks the angel with card-paper wings. At the moment when the priest pronounces the blessing, every eye is fixed on the actors, watching for the apparition which is to arrest Abraham's hand. A little further, and the marriage of the Virgin is shown by three performers; a man dressed as a woman—the Virgin Mary; an old man with a flowering wand—Saint Joseph; and Simeon the priest who marries them. At the proper moment Saint Joseph puts his ring on the Madonna's finger, and the procession marches past them to the brazen clang of the *banda municipale*.

The Easter festival at Solmona is another survival of the religious drama of the past. A crowd collects on the Piazza Maggiore, and the windows are crowded with heads. An altar-table, quite bare, is erected under one of the arches of the aqueduct which is hung with splendid flags. The procession starts at ten in the morning from the church of Santa Maria della Tomba. It consists of a long file of statues, St. Peter the Apostle, St. John the Baptist,

Joseph of Arimathea, St. Thomas and others; then statues of female saints, Anna, Mary Magdalen, and a score more, just like the grand procession at Naples in honour of St. Januarius. The last figure is that of Christ after the Resurrection, which is placed on the altar. The Virgin alone is absent; she is hiding in a house at the other side of the square, mourning the death of her Divine Son. All the saints, male and female, each carried by four bearers, set to work to search for her in order to tell her of His Resurrection, as she has not yet heard of it. They move hither and thither among the crowd. At last the Mother of the Lord is found. She does not immediately believe the glad tidings brought by the messengers, and refuses to appear. Then, still doubtful, she makes up her mind to come forth, draped in black, and holding a handkerchief soaked with her tears. Soon she ceases to doubt, she descries Jesus! She lets her black mantle drop and swallows fly away from it; instead of the handkerchief there is a nosegay in her hand. The crowd shout, the music breaks out with a joyful strain, and the Virgin's porters carry her in haste to the altar. Is there not something very touching in the simplicity of this presentment of the sacred drama?

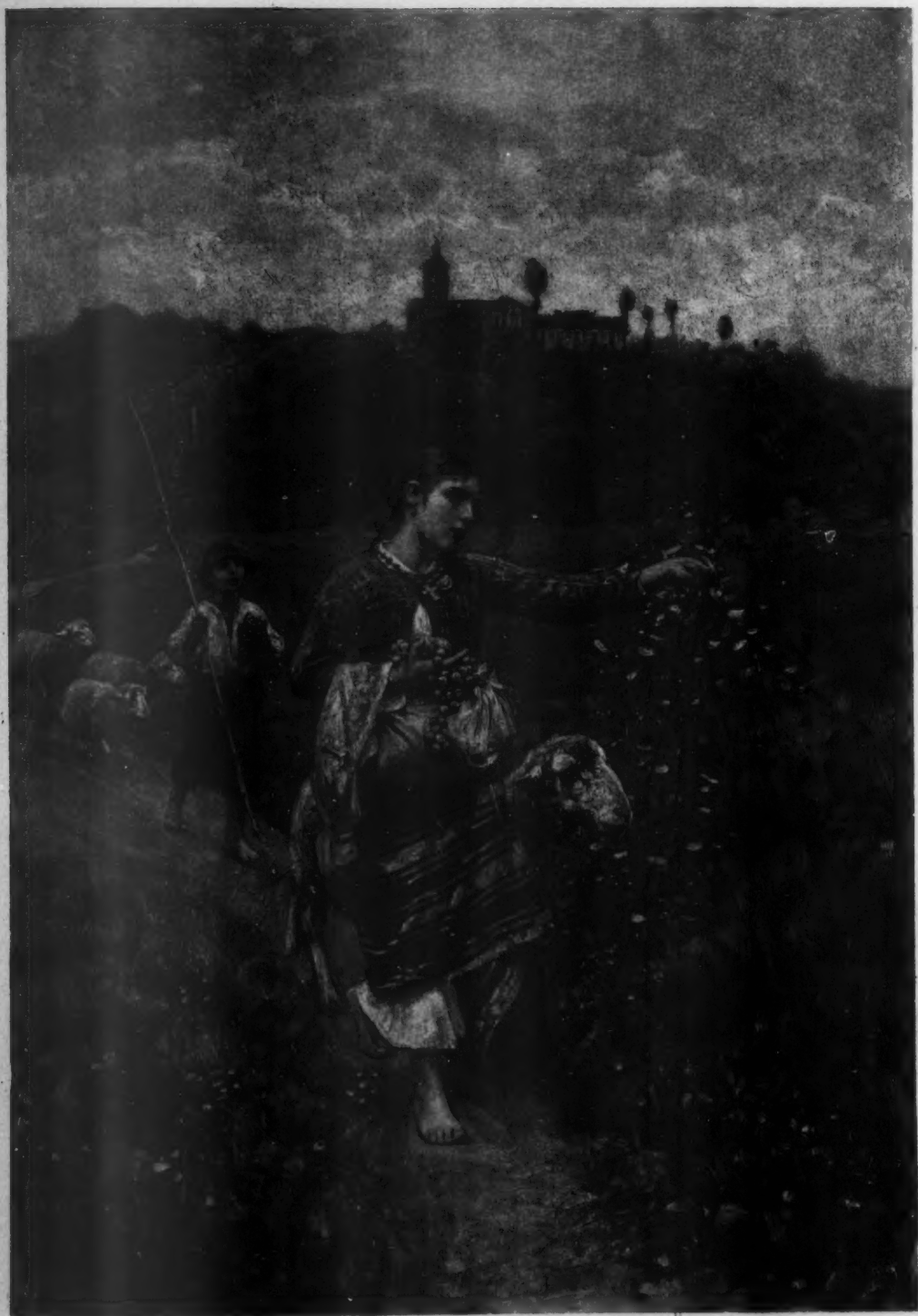
Other religious customs of the natives of the Abruzzi have supplied subjects more than once, and with happy effect, for M. Michetti's brush; in his retirement on the shores of the Adriatic he has devoted himself to studying the customs of his fellow-countrymen. The reader may have seen his "Procession to Chieti," and his fine picture called "The Vow," which represents the interior of a church. On the ground, in front of the altar, with tapers burning about it, is the silver head of St. Dominic; the peasants who are fulfilling the vow, men and women alike, are kissing it, dragging themselves up to it flat on their stomachs. The artist has managed to show us in their ardent eyes and abject attitudes, like subdued animals, all the passion of their sensual and vehement faith.

After the religious festivals come the secular high days. Of these the Carnival is everywhere the longest and the most important. The great masquerade procession, symbolical of the year and its twelve sons, wanders from village to village; each month carries its proper attributes, fruit, flowers, agricultural and household implements; the masks stand round, the band in their midst, and sing, each in turn, a verse of four lines. In the afternoon of













Shrove Tuesday a sort of "Guy" is carried round at the top of a pole; this figure represents the Carnival, the masks kill it with knives, a funeral mass is performed, and it is burnt amid the shrieks of delight from the children, and a burlesque of mourning from the women.

A more amusing spectacle is the masquerade of hermits at Tagliacozzo, which we ourselves saw. We had hardly dismounted when we saw a party of masks dancing on the market-place; all, to our surprise, dressed as hermits, in grey and brown robes, with forked sticks and long sham beards. At every street corner we came upon hermits and more hermits, even in the cafés; there were some dining at our inn table, and their monastic garb was no restraint on their extravagant mirth. This traditional custom, which is startling in such a pious province, had originally no doubt some satirical meaning reflecting on the cenobites of earlier days. It is at Tagliacozzo, too, that certain religious ceremonies are performed during the Carnival, which are known as *Carnovaletti*. The parish church, after midnight, is the scene of the meeting; it is filled with people who talk and come and go, and pay scarcely any heed to the priest who is saying mass and prayers. As soon as they get out of church every one begins to yell, to roar, to whistle, to rap at the house doors; the riotous spirit of the Carnival, after a few minutes of repression, breaks out afresh with noisy violence. The Eve of St. John's day must also be reckoned among the secular festivals, for, in many nations, it seems to survive as a tradition handed down from the very ancient celebrations of the Summer Solstice. The inhabitants on Monte Majella climb the peak that night, to gather the sovereign herbs which grow there, and which make it, as they say, the greatest mountain in the world. They search especially for mandragora, which is said to be a specific against every disease. (O Macchiavelli!) When they have collected a store, men and women come home singing, crowned with bryony, and carrying a branch in one hand—the green bough of the ancient Augurs. The children drum on tambourines, and blow into dried gourds. Those who have not gone out with the pilgrims come to meet them at the skirts of the village. At sunrise the wreaths must be thrown away, but those who have worn them are secured against headaches for the whole year.

In other districts the pretty peasant girls go forth at dawn on St. John's day to bathe their hands in the dew on the grass and wash their faces with

it; they return home with flowers in their bodices and green sprays in their hair. This is the universal homage to vegetable life, the fair dress of earth, the emblem of festivity and vitality. Though the tradition is pagan, the Church has transmitted it wherever it has been able; it is easy to recognize in the little chapel on a rock near Toricella Peligna, a temple of Flora, though the feast of flowers held there every year is in honour of "Madonna delle Rose."

The calends of May are still, as they were in the time of the ancient Romans, an occasion for rejoicing in the Abruzzi. The first of May is the festival of Spring and Youth. "*O Primavera, gioventù dell' anno!*" The young people assemble on the heights before daybreak to go forth to meet the May. They sing and shout: "Here comes the May! May lives again! Hurrah for the May!"

As dawn grows on them the clamour increases, and the gladness of these simple souls is at its climax when the first sun of Spring rises above the horizon.

Such are the people who still inhabit the land of the Samnites and such they will still remain for some time to come, faithful to the many traditions which guard the mysterious majesty of rites whose origin is long forgotten.

PIERRE DE NOLHAC.

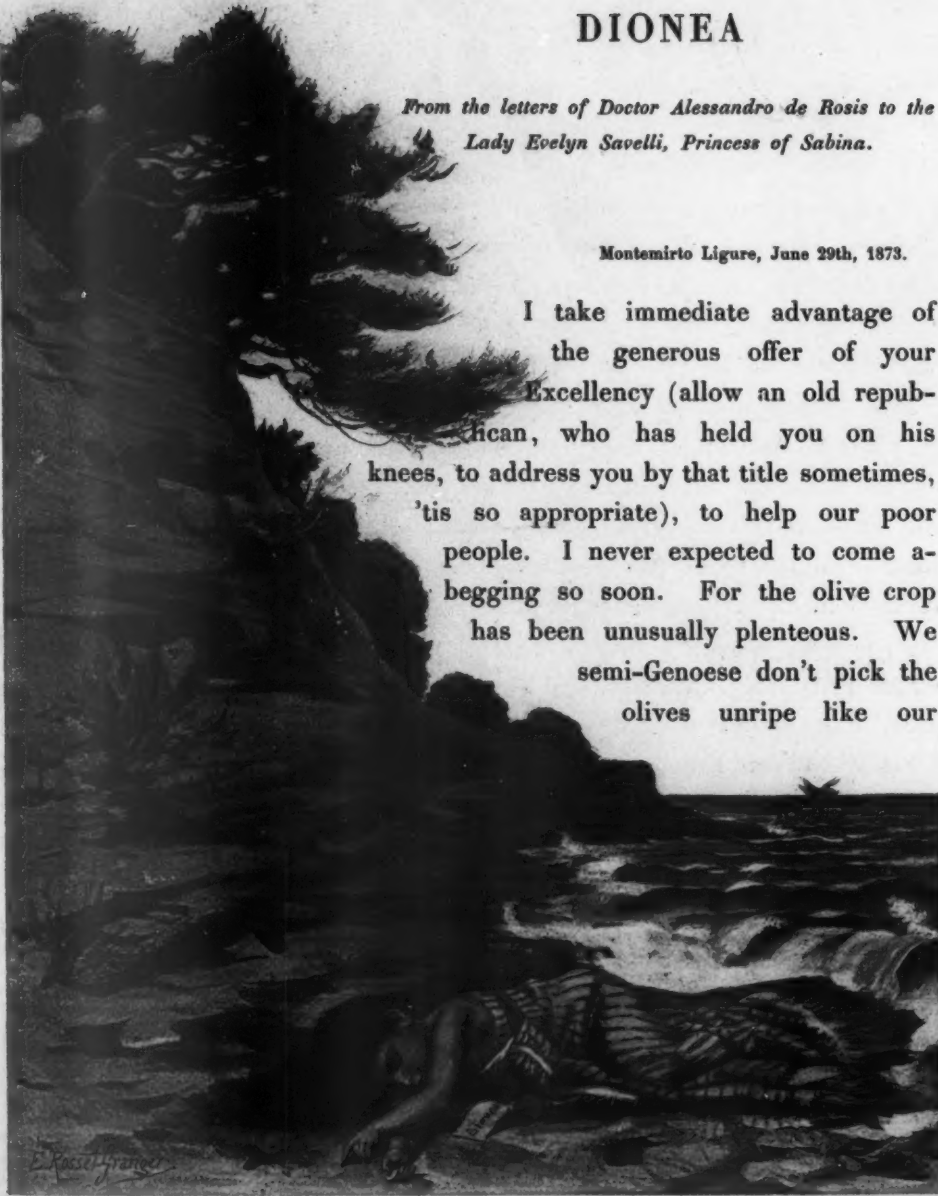


## DIONEA

*From the letters of Doctor Alessandro de Rosi to the  
Lady Evelyn Savelli, Princess of Sabina.*

Montemirto Ligure, June 29th, 1873.

I take immediate advantage of  
the generous offer of your  
Excellency (allow an old repub-  
lican, who has held you on his  
knees, to address you by that title sometimes,  
'tis so appropriate), to help our poor  
people. I never expected to come a-  
begging so soon. For the olive crop  
has been unusually plenteous. We  
semi-Genoese don't pick the  
olives unripe like our





Tuscan neighbours, but let them grow big and black, when the young fellows go into the trees with long reeds and shake them down on the grass for the women to collect, a pretty sight which your Excellency must see some day; the grey trees with the brown barefoot lads craning balanced in the branches, and the turquoise sea as background just beneath—— That sea of ours—— it is all along of it that I wish to ask for money. Looking up from my desk, I see the sea through the window, deep below and beyond the olive woods, bluish green in the sunshine and veined with violet under the cloudbars, like one of your Ravenna mosaics spread out as pavement for the world; a wicked sea: wicked in its loveliness, wickeder than your grey northern ones, and from which must have arisen in times gone by (when Phœnicians or Greeks built the temples at Lerici and Porto Venere), a baleful goddess of beauty, a Venus Verticordia, but in the bad sense of the word, overwhelming men's lives in sudden darkness like that of the squall of last week.

To come to the point. I want you, dear Lady Evelyn, to promise me some money, a great deal of money, as much as would buy you a little mannish cloth frock—for the complete bringing up, until years of discretion, of a little stranger whom the sea has laid up on our shore. Our people, kind as they are, are very poor, and overburdened with children; besides, they have got a certain repugnance towards this poor little waif, cast up by that dreadful storm, and who is doubtless a heathen, for she had no little crosses or scapulars on, like proper Christian children. So being unable to get any of our women to adopt the child, and having an old bachelor's terror of my housekeeper, I have bethought me of certain nuns, holy women, who teach little girls to say their prayers and make lace close by here; and of your dear Excellency to pay for the whole business.

Poor little brown mite! She was picked up after the storm (such a set-out of ship-models and votive candles as that storm must have brought the Madonna at Porto Venere!) on a strip of sand between the rocks of our castle; the thing was really miraculous, for this coast is like a shark's jaw, and the bits of sand are tiny and far between. She was lashed to a plank, swaddled up close in outlandish garments; and when

they brought her to me, they thought she must certainly be dead; a little girl of four or five, decidedly pretty, and as brown as a berry, who when she came to, shook her head to show she understood no kind of Italian, and jabbered some half intelligible eastern jabber, a few Greek words embedded in I know not what; the Superior of the College *de Propaganda Fide* would be puzzled to know.

The child appears to be the only survivor from a ship which must have gone down in the great squall, and whose timbers have been strewing the bay for some days past; no one at Spezia or in any of our ports knows anything about her, but she was seen, apparently making for Porto Venere, by some of our sardine fishers; a big lumbering craft, with eyes painted on each side of the prow, which, as you know, is a peculiarity of Greek boats. She was sighted for the last time off the island of Palmaria, entering, with all sails spread, right into the thick of the storm darkness. No bodies, strangely enough, have been washed ashore.

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July 10th.

I have received the money, dear Donna Evelina. There was tremendous excitement down at San Massimo when the carrier came in with a registered letter, and I was sent for, in presence of all the village authorities, to sign my name on the postal register.

The child has already been settled some days with the nuns; such dear little nuns (nuns always go straight to the heart of an old priest-hater and conspirator against the Pope, you know), dressed in brown robes, and close white caps, with an immense round straw hat flapping behind their head like a nimbus; they are called Sisters of the Stigmata, and have a convent and school at San Massimo, a little way inland, with an untidy garden full of lavender and cherry trees. Your *protégée* has already half set the convent, the village, the episcopal see, the order of St. Francis, by the ears. First, because nobody could make out whether or not she had been christened; the question was a grave one, for it appears (as your uncle-in-law the Cardinal will tell you), that it is almost equally undesirable to be christened twice over as not

to be christened at all. The first danger was finally decided upon as the less terrible; but the child, they say, had evidently been baptized before, and knew that the operation ought not to be repeated, for she kicked and plunged and yelled like twenty little devils, and positively would not let the holy water touch her. The Mother Superior, who always took for granted that the baptism had taken place before, says that the child was all right, and that Heaven was trying to prevent a sacrilege, but the priest, and the barber's wife who had to hold her, think the occurrence fearful, and suspect the little girl of being a Protestant.

Then, the question of the name. Pinned to her clothes—striped eastern things and that kind of crinkled silk stuff they weave in Crete and Cyprus—was a piece of parchment, a scapular we thought at first, but which was found to contain only the name ΔΙΟΝΕΑ—Dionea, as they pronounce it here. The question was, could such a name be fitly borne by a young lady of the convent of the Stigmata? Half the population here have names as unchristian quite—Norma, Odoacer, Archimedes—my housemaid is called Themis—but Dionea seemed to scandalize every one, perhaps because these good folk had a mysterious instinct that the name is derived from Dione, one of the loves of Father Zeus, and mother of no less a lady than the goddess Venus. The child was very nearly being called Maria, although there are already twenty-three other Marias, Mariettas, Mariuccias and so forth at the convent. But the sister book-keeper, who apparently detests monotony, bethought her to look out Dionea first in the Calendar, which proved useless, and then in a big vellum-bound book, printed at Venice in 1625, called "*FLOS SANCTORUM or Lives of the Saints by Father Ribadeneira S. J. with the addition of such Saints as have no assigned place in the Almanack, otherwise called the Movable or Extravagant Saints*"—the zeal of Sister Anna Maddalena has been rewarded, for there, among the Extravagant Saints, sure enough, with a border of palm branches and hour-glasses, stands the name of Saint Dionea, Virgin and Martyr, a lady of Antioch, put to death by the Emperor Decius. I know your Excellency's taste for historical information, so I forward this item. But I fear, dear lady



Evelyn, I fear that the heavenly patroness of your little sea waif was a much more extravagant saint than that.

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Dec. 21st, 1879.

Many thanks, dear Donna Evelina, for the money for Dionea's schooling; indeed it was not wanted yet; the accomplishments of young ladies are taught at a very moderate rate at Montemirto; and as to clothes, which you mention, a pair of wooden clogs, with pretty red tips, costs sixty-five centimes and ought to last three years, if the owner is careful to carry them on her head in a neat parcel, when out walking, and to put them on again only on entering the village. The Mother Superior is greatly overcome by your Excellency's munificence towards the convent, and much perturbed at being unable to send you a specimen of your *protégée's* skill, exemplified in an embroidered pocket handkerchief or a pair of mittens; but the fact is that poor Dionea *has* no skill. "We will pray to the Madonna and St. Francis to make her more worthy," remarked the Superior. Perhaps, however, your Excellency, who is, I fear but a pagan woman (for all the Savelli popes and St. Andrew Savelli's miracles), and insufficiently appreciative of embroidered pocket handkerchiefs, will be quite as satisfied to hear that Dionea instead of skill has got the prettiest face of any little girl of Montemirto. She is tall for her age—she is eleven—quite wonderfully well proportioned and extremely strong; of all the conventful, she is the only one for whom I have never been called in. The features are very regular, the hair black, and despite all the good sisters' efforts to keep it smooth like a Chinaman's, beautifully curly. I am glad she should be pretty, for she will more easily find a husband, and also because it seems fitting that your *protégée* should be beautiful.

Unfortunately her character is not so satisfactory; she hates learning, sewing, washing up the dishes, all equally; I am sorry to say she shows no natural piety. Her companions detest her, and the nuns, although they admit that she is not exactly naughty, seem to feel her as a dreadful thorn in the flesh. She spends hours and hours on the terrace overlooking the sea (her great desire, she confided to me,

is to get to the sea, to get *back to the sea*, as she expressed it), and lying in the garden, under the big myrtle bushes, and, in spring and summer, under the rose hedge (the nuns say that rose hedge and that myrtle bush are growing a great deal too big, one would think from Dionea's lying under them; the fact, I suppose, has drawn attention to them). "That child makes all the useless weeds grow," remarked Sister Reparata. Another of Dionea's amusements is playing with pigeons. The number of pigeons she collects about her is quite amazing; you would never have thought that San Massimo or the neighbouring hills contained as many. They flutter down like snow-flakes, and strut and swell themselves out and furl and unfurl their tails, and peck with little sharp movements of their silly sensual heads and a little throb and gurgle in their throats, while Dionea lies stretched out full length in the sun, putting out her lips which they come to kiss, and uttering strange cooing sounds; or hopping about, flapping her arms slowly like wings, and raising her little head with much the same odd gesture as they—'tis a lovely sight, a thing fit for one of your painters, Burne Jones or Tadema, with the myrtle bushes all round, the bright whitewashed convent walls behind, the white marble chapel steps (all steps are marble in this Carrara country), and the enamel blue sea through the ilex branches beyond. But the good sisters abominate these pigeons, who, it appears, are messy little creatures; and they complain that were it not that the Reverend Director likes a pigeon in his pot on a holiday, they could not stand the bother of perpetually sweeping the chapel steps and the kitchen threshold all along of those dirty birds—

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August 6th, 1882.

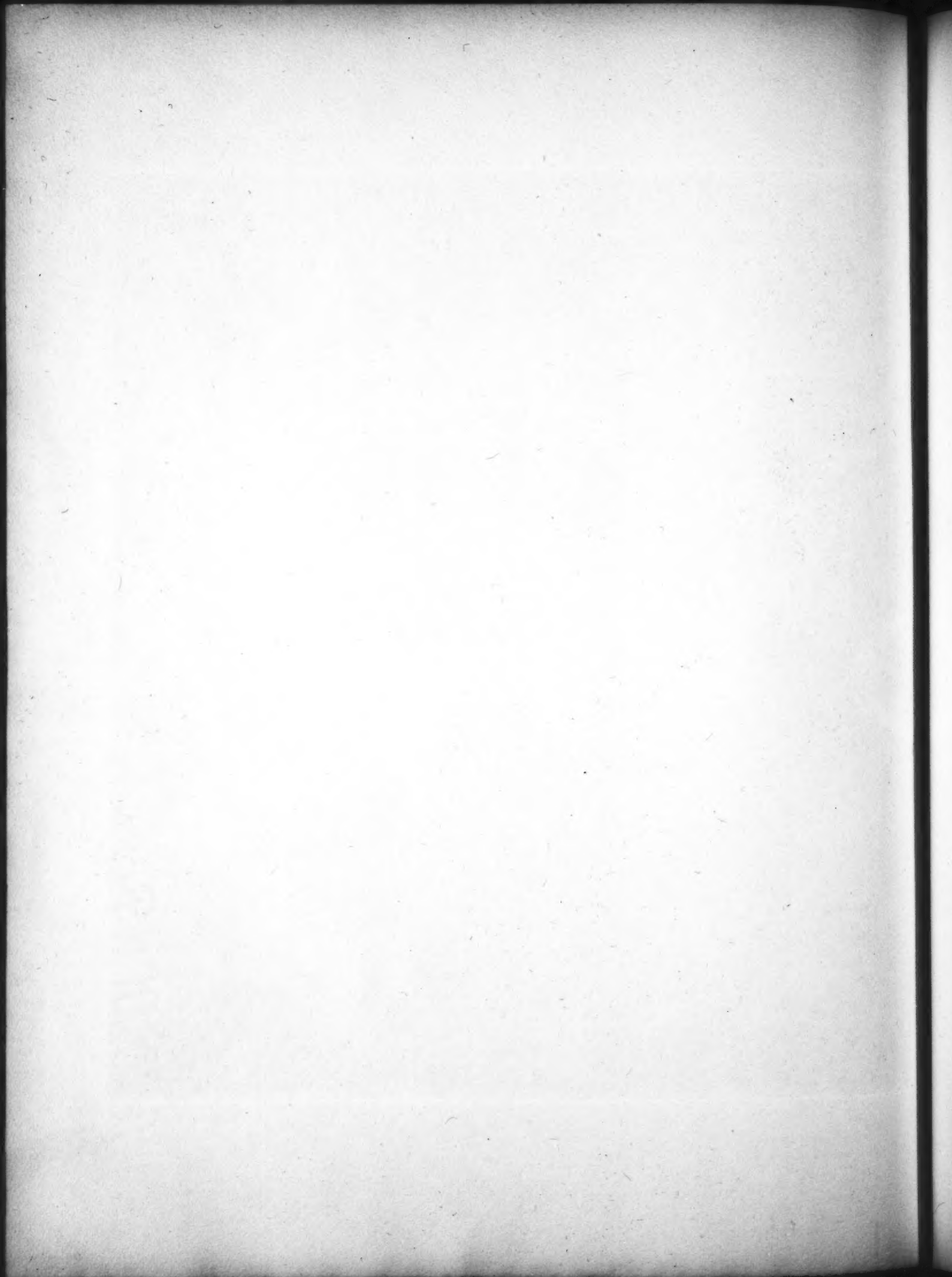
Do not tempt me, dearest Excellency, with your invitations to Rome. I should not be happy there, and do but little honour to your friendship. My many years of exile, of wanderings in northern countries, have made me a little bit into a northern man; I cannot quite get on with my own fellow-countrymen, except with the good peasants and fishermen all round. Besides—forgive the vanity of an old man who has learned to make triple acrostic sonnets to cheat the days and months at Theresienstadt













and Spielberg—I have suffered too much for Italy to endure patiently the sight of little parliamentary cabals and municipal wranglings, although they also are necessary in this day as conspiracies and battles were in mine. I am not fit for your roomful of ministers and learned men and pretty women; the former would think me an ignoramus, and the latter, what would afflict me much more, a pedant— Rather, if your Excellency really wants to show yourself and your children to your father's old *protégé* of Mazzinian times, find a few days to come here next spring. You shall have some very bare rooms with brick floors and white curtains opening out on my terrace, and a dinner of all manner of fish, and milk (the white garlic flowers shall be mown away from under the olives lest my cow should eat them, and eggs shall be cooked in herbs plucked in the hedges). Your boys can go and see the big ironclads at Spezia; and you shall come with me up our lanes fringed with delicate ferns and overhung by big olives, and into the fields where the cherry trees shed their blossoms on to the budding vines, the fig trees stretching out their little green gloves; where the goats nibble perched on their hind legs, and the cows low in the huts of reeds, and there rise from the ravines, with the gurgle of the brooks, from the cliffs, with the boom of the surf, the voices of unseen boys and girls, singing about love, and flowers and death just as in the days of Theocritus, whom your learned Excellency does well to read.

Has your Excellency ever read Longus, a Greek pastoral novelist? He is a trifle free, a trifle nude for us readers of Zola; but the old French of Amyot has a wonderful charm, and he gives one an idea, as no one else does, how folk lived in such valleys, by such sea-boards as these in the days when daisy chains and garlands of roses were still hung on the olive trees for the nymphs of the grove; when across the bay, at the end of the narrow neck of blue sea, there clung to the marble rocks not a church of Saint Lawrence with the sculptured martyr on his gridiron, but the temple of Venus, protecting her harbour— Yes, dear Lady Evelyn, you have guessed aright. Your old friend has returned to his sins, and is scribbling once more. But no longer at verses or political pamphlets. I am enthralled by a

tragic history, the history of the fall of the Pagan Gods— have you ever read of their wanderings and disguises, in my friend Heine's little book?

And if you come to Montemirto, you shall see also your *protégée*, of whom you ask for news.

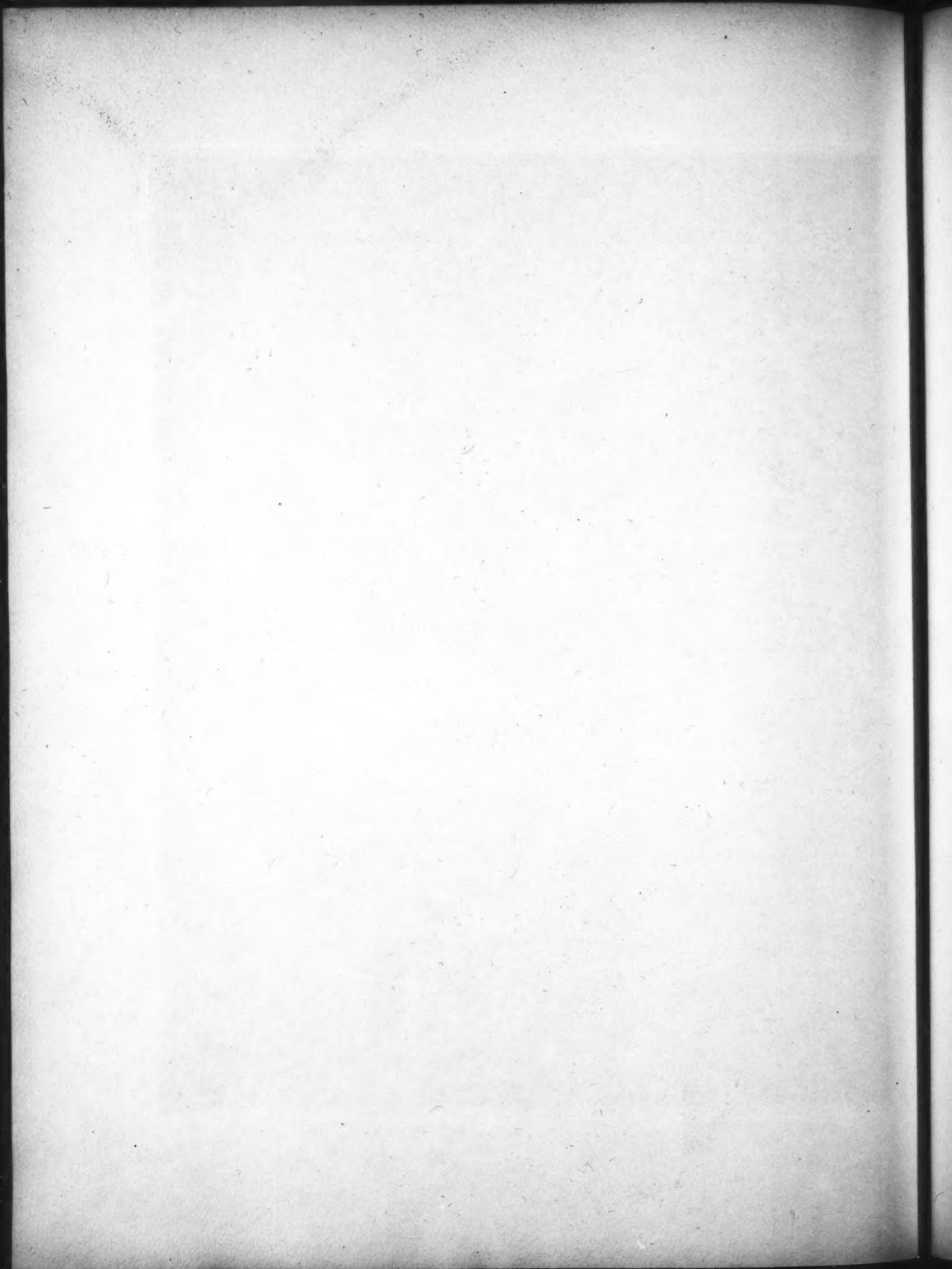
It has just missed being disastrous. Poor Dionea! I fear that early voyage tied to the spar did no good to her wits, poor little waif. There has been a fearful row; and it has required all my influence, and all the awfulness of your Excellency's name, and the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire to prevent her expulsion by the Sisters of the Stigmata. It appears that this mad creature very nearly committed a sacrilege; she was discovered handling in a suspicious manner the Madonna's gala frock and her best veil of *pizzo di Cantù*, a gift of the late Marchioness Violante Vigalena of Fornovo. One of the orphans, Zaira Barsanti, whom they call the Rossaccia, even pretends to have surprised Dionea as she was about to adorn her wicked little person with these sacred garments; and, on another occasion, when Dionea had been sent to pass some oil and sawdust over the chapel floor (it was the eve of Easter of the Roses), to have discovered her seated on the edge of the altar, in the very place of the Most Holy Sacrament. I was sent for in hot haste, and had to assist at an ecclesiastical council in the convent parlour, where Dionea appeared rather out of place, an amazing little beauty, dark, lithe, with an odd ferocious gleam in her eyes, and a still odder smile, tortuous, serpentine like that of Leonardo da Vinci's women, among the plaster images of Saint Francis, and the glazed and framed samplers, before the little statue of the Virgin, which wears in summer a kind of mosquito curtain to guard it from the flies, who, as you know, are creatures of Satan. Speaking of Satan, does your Excellency know that on the inside of our little convent door, just above the little perforated plate of metal (like the rose of a watering pot) through which the sister portress peeps and talks, is pasted a little printed form, an arrangement of holy names, and texts in triangles, and the stigmatised hands of Saint Francis, and a variety of other devices, for the purpose, as is explained in a special













notice, of baffling the Evil One and preventing his entrance into that building? Had you seen Dionea, and the stolid, contemptuous way in which she took without attempting to refute, the various shocking allegations against her, your Excellency would have reflected, as I did, that the door in question must have been accidentally absent from the premises, perhaps at the joiner's for repair, the day that your *protégée* first penetrated into the convent. The ecclesiastical tribunal, consisting of the Mother Superior, three Sisters, the Capuchin Director and your humble servant (who vainly attempted to be devil's advocate), sentenced Dionea, among other things, to make the sign of the cross twenty-six times on the bare floor with her tongue. Poor little child! One might almost expect that, as happened when Dame Venus scratched her hand on the thorn bush, red roses should sprout up between the fissures of the dirty old bricks.

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October 14th, 1883.

You ask whether, now that the sisters let Dionea go and do half a day's service now and then in the village, and that Dionea is a grown-up creature, she does not set the place by the ears with her beauty. The people here are quite aware of its existence. She is already dubbed "La bella Dionea;" but that does not bring her any nearer getting a husband, although your Excellency's generous offer of a wedding portion is well-known throughout the district of San Massimo and Montemirto. None of our boys, peasants or fishermen, seem to hang on her steps; and if they turn round to stare and whisper as she goes by, straight and dainty in her wooden clogs, with the pitcher of water or the basket of linen on her beautiful crisp dark head, it is, I remark, with an expression rather of fear than of love. The women, on their side, make horns with their fingers as she passes, and as they sit by her side in the convent chapel; but that seems natural. My housekeeper tells me that down in the village she is regarded as possessing the evil eye and bringing love misery. "You mean," I said, "that a glance from her is too much for our lads' peace of mind." Veneranda shook her head, and explained, with the deference and contempt with which she always men-

tions any of her country-folks' superstitions to me, that the matter is different; it's not with her they are in love (they would be afraid of her eye), but wherever she goes the young people must needs fall in love with each other, and usually where it is far from desirable. "You know Sora Lena, the blacksmith's widow? Well, Dionea did a *half service* for her last month, to prepare for the wedding of Lena's daughter. Well, now the girl must say, forsooth, that she won't have Pierino of Lerici any longer, but will have that ragamuffin Wooden Pipe from Solaro, or go into a convent. And the girl changed her mind the very day that Dionea had come into the house. Then there is the wife of Pippo, the coffee-house keeper; they say she is carrying on with one of the coast-guards, and Dionea helped her to do her washing six weeks ago. The son of Sor Temistocle has just cut off a finger to avoid the conscription, because he is mad about his cousin and afraid of being taken for a soldier; and it is a fact that some of the shirts which were made for him at the Stigmata had been sewn by Dionea——" And thus a perfect string of love misfortunes, enough to make a little Decameron, I assure you, and all laid to Dionea's account. Certain it is that the people of San Massimo are terribly afraid of Dionea——

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July 17th, 1884.

Dionea's strange influence seems to be extending in a terrible way. I am almost beginning to think that folk are correct in their fear of the young witch. I used to think, as physician to a convent, that nothing was more erroneous than all the romancings of Diderot and Schubert (your Excellency sang me his "Young Nun" once: do you recollect, just before your marriage?) and that no more humdrum creature existed than one of our little nuns, with their pink baby faces under their tight white caps. It appears the romancing was more correct than the prose. Unknown things have sprung up in these good sisters' hearts, as unknown flowers have sprung up among the myrtle bushes and the rose hedge which Dionea lies under. Did I ever mention to you a certain little Sister Giuliana, who professed only two years ago? a funny rose and white

little creature presiding over the infirmary, as prosaic a little saint as ever kissed a crucifix or scoured a saucepan—Well, Sister Giuliana has disappeared, and the same day there disappeared also a sailor boy from the port.

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August 20th, 1884.

The case of Sister Giuliana seems to have been but the beginning of an extraordinary love epidemic at the convent of the Stigmata; the elder school-girls have to be kept under lock and key lest they should talk over the wall in the moonlight, or steal out to the little hunchback who writes love letters at a penny apiece, beautiful flourishes and all, under the portico by the fish-market. I wonder does that wicked little Dionea, whom no one pays court to, smile (her lips like a Cupid's bow, or a tiny snake's curves), as she calls the pigeons draw down around her, or lies fondling the cats under the myrtle bush, when she sees the pupils going about with swollen red eyes, the poor little nuns taking fresh penances on the cold chapel flags; and hears the long-drawn guttural vowels, *amore* and *morte* and *mio bene* which rise up of an evening, with the boom of the surf and the scent of the lemon flowers, as the young men wander up and down, arm in arm, twanging their guitars along the moonlit lanes under the olives?

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October 20th, 1885.

A terrible, terrible thing has happened. I write to your Excellency with hands all a-tremble; and yet I *must* write, I must speak, or else I shall cry out.

Did I ever mention to you Father Domenico of Casoria, the confessor of our convent of the Stigmata? A young man, tall, emaciated with fasts and vigils, but handsome like the monk playing the virginal in Giorgione's "Concert," and under his brown serge, still the most stalwart fellow of all the country round? One has heard of men struggling with the tempter; well, well, Father Domenico had struggled as hard as any of the anchorites recorded by St. Jerome, and he had conquered. I never knew anything comparable to the angelic serenity of gentleness of this victorious soul. I don't like monks, but I loved



Father Domenico. I might have been his father, easily, yet I always felt a certain shyness and awe of him; and yet men have accounted me a clean-lived man in my generation; but I felt, whenever I approached him, a poor worldly creature, debased by the knowledge of so many mean and ugly things. Of late Father Domenico had seemed to me less calm than usual; his eyes had grown strangely bright, and red spots had formed on his salient cheek-bones; one day last week, taking his hand, I felt his pulse flutter, and all his strength as it were liquefy under my touch. "You are ill," I said, "you have fever. Father Domenico, you have been overdoing yourself—some new privation, some new penance—take care and do not tempt Heaven; remember the flesh is weak." Father Domenico withdrew his hand quickly. "Do not say that," he cried, "the flesh is strong!" and turned away his face; his eyes were glistening and he shook all over. "Some quinine," I ordered. But I felt it was no case for quinine. Prayers might be more useful, and could I have given them, he should not have wanted. Last night I was suddenly sent for to Father Domenico's monastery above Montemirto; they told me he was ill. I ran up through the dim twilight of moonbeams and olives, with a sinking heart. Something told me my monk was dead. He was lying in a little low whitewashed room; they had carried him there from his own cell in hopes he might still be alive. The windows were wide open, they framed some olive branches, glistening in the moonlight, and far below, a strip of moonlit sea. When I told them he was really dead, they brought some tapers and lit them at his head and feet, and placed a crucifix between his hands. "The Lord has been pleased to call our poor brother to Him," said the Superior. "A case of apoplexy, my dear Doctor—a case of apoplexy—you will make out the certificate for the authorities." I made out the certificate. It was weak of me. But after all, why make a scandal? I certainly had no wish to injure the poor monks.

Next day I found the little nuns all in tears. They were gathering flowers to send as a last gift to their confessor. In the convent garden I found Dionea, standing by the side of a big basket of roses; one of the white pigeons perched on her shoulder.

"So," she said, "he has killed himself with charcoal, poor Padre Domenico."

Something in her tone, her eyes, shocked me.

"God has called to Himself one of His most faithful servants," I said gravely.

Standing opposite this girl, magnificent, radiant in her beauty before the rose hedge, with the white pigeons furling and unfurling, strutting and pecking all round, I seemed to see suddenly the whitewashed room of last night, the big crucifix, that poor thin face under the yellow wax-light. I felt glad for Father Domenico; his battle was over.

"Take this to Father Domenico from me," said Dionea, breaking off a twig of myrtle starred over with white blossom; and raising her head with that smile like the twist of a young snake, she sang out in a high guttural voice a strange chaunt, consisting of the word *Amor—amor—amor*. I took the branch of myrtle and threw it in her face.

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January 3rd, 1886.

It will be difficult to find a place for Dionea and, in this neighbourhood, well-nigh impossible. The people associate her somehow with the death of Father Domenico, which has confirmed her reputation of having the evil eye. She left the convent (being now seventeen), some two months back, and is at present gaining her bread working with the masons at our Notary's new house at Lerici; the work is hard, but our women often do it, and it is magnificent to see Dionea, in her short white skirt and tight white bodice, mixing the smoking lime with her beautiful strong arms, or, an empty sack drawn over her head and shoulders, walking majestically up the cliff, up the scaffoldings, with her load of bricks—

I am, however, very anxious to get Dionea out of the neighbourhood, because I cannot help dreading the annoyances to which her reputation for the evil eye exposes her, and even some explosion of rage if ever she should lose the indifferent contempt with which she treats them. I hear that one of the rich men of our part of the world, a certain Sor Agostino of Sarzana, who owns a whole flank of marble mountain,

is looking out for a maid for his daughter who is about to be married; kind people and patriarchal in their riches, the old man still sitting down to table with all his servants, and his nephew, who is going to be his son-in-law, a splendid young fellow, who has worked, like Jacob, in the quarry and at the saw-mill for love of his pretty cousin. That whole house is so good, simple and peaceful, that I hope it may tame down even Dionea. If I do not succeed in getting Dionea this place (and all your Excellency's illustriousness and all my poor eloquence will be needed to counteract the sinister reports attaching to our poor little waif), it will be best to accept your suggestion of taking the girl into your household at Rome, since you are curious to see what you call our baleful beauty. I am amused, and a little indignant, at what you say about your footmen being handsome; Don Juan himself, my dear Lady Evelyn, would be cowed by Dionea—

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May 29th, 1886.

Here is Dionea back upon our hands once more! but I cannot send her to your Excellency. Is it from living among these peasants and fishing folk; or is it because, as people pretend, a sceptic is always superstitious? I could not muster courage to send you Dionea, although your boys are still in sailor clothes and your uncle the Cardinal is eighty-four, and as to the Prince, why, he bears the most potent amulet against Dionea's terrible powers in your own dear capricious person. Seriously, there is something eery in this coincidence. Poor Dionea—I feel sorry for her, exposed to the passion of a once patriarchally respectable old man; I feel even more abashed at the incredible audacity, I should almost say sacrilegious madness, of the vile old creature. But still, the coincidence is strange and uncomfortable. Last week the lightning struck a huge olive in the orchard of Sor Agostino's house above Sarzana; under the olive was Sor Agostino himself, who was killed on the spot; and opposite, not twenty paces off, drawing water from the well, unhurt and calm, was Dionea. It was the end of a sultry afternoon; I was on a terrace in one of those villages of ours, jammed, like some hardy bush, in the gash of a hill-side. I saw the



storm rush down the valley, a sudden blackness, and then, like a curse, a flash, a tremendous crash, re-echoed by a dozen hills. "I told him," Dionea said very quietly, when she came to stay with me the next day (for Sor Agostino's family would not have her for another half minute), "that if he did not leave me alone Heaven would send him an accident."

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July 15th, 1886.

My book? Oh, dear Donna Evelina, do not make me blush by talking of my book! Do not make an old man, respectable, a Government functionary (communal physician of the district of San Massimo and Montemirto Ligure), confess that he is but a lazy unprofitable dreamer, collecting materials as a child picks hips out of a hedge, only to throw them away, liking them merely for the little occupation of scratching his hands and standing on tip-toe, for their pretty redness— You remember what Balzac says about projecting any piece of work : *c'est fumer des cigarettes enchantées*— Well, well. The data obtainable about the Ancient Gods in their days of adversity are few and far between; a quotation here and there from the fathers, two or three legends; Venus re-appearing, the persecutions of Apollo in Styria, Proserpina going, in Chaucer, to reign over the fairies; a few obscure religious persecutions in the Middle Ages on the score of paganism; some strange rites practised till lately in the depths of a Breton forest near Lannion— As to Tannhäuser— he was a real knight and a sorry one, and a real *minnesinger* not of the best. Your Excellency will find some of his poems in Von der Hagen's four immense volumes, but I recommend you to take your notions of Ritter Tannhäuser's poetry rather from Wagner. Certain it is that the Pagan Divinities lasted much longer than we suspect, sometimes in their own nakedness, sometimes in the stolen garb of the Madonna or the saints. Who knows whether they do not exist to this day? And indeed, is it possible they should not? For the awfulness of the deep woods with their filtered green light, the creak of the swaying solitary reeds exists, and is Pan; and the blue, starry May night exists, the sough of the waves, the warm wind carrying the sweetness of the

lemon blossoms, the bitterness of the myrtle on our rocks, carrying the distant chaunt of the boys cleaning out their nets, of the girls sickling the grass under the olives, *Amor—amor—amor*; and opposite to me, as I write, between the branches of the ilexes, across the blue sea, streaked like a Ravenna mosaic with purple and green, shimmer the white houses and walls, the steeple and towers, an enchanted Fata Morgana city, of dim Porto Venere—— and I mumble to myself the verse of Catullus, but addressing a greater and more terrible goddess than he did :

Procul a me sit furor omnis, hera, domo;  
 Alios age incitatos, alios age rabidos—

March 25th, 1887.

Yes, I will do everything in my power for your friends; are you well-bred folk as well-bred as we, republican *bourgeois* with the coarse hands (though you once told me mine were psychic hands when the mania of palmistry had not yet been succeeded by that of the reconciliation between Church and State), I wonder, that you should apologise, you whose father fed me and housed me and clothed me in my exile, for giving me the horrid trouble of hunting for lodgings? It is like you, dear Donna Evelina, to have sent me photographs of my future friend Waldemar's statues. I have no love for modern sculpture, for all the hours I have spent in Gibson's and Dupré's studio; 'tis a dead art we should do better to bury. But your Waldemar has something of the old spirit; he seems to feel the divineness of the mere body, the spirituality of a limpid stream of mere physical life. But why among these statues only men and boys, athletes and fauns, why only the bust of that thin, delicate-lipped little Madonna wife of his; why no wide-shouldered Amazon or broad-flanked Aphrodite?

April 10th, 1887.

You ask me how poor Dionea is getting on. Not as your Excellency and I ought to have expected when we placed her with the good Sisters of the Stigmata, although I wager that, fantastic and capricious as you are, you would be better pleased (hiding it carefully from that grave side of you which bestows devout little books and carbolic acid upon the

indigent), that your *protégée* should be a witch than a serving maid, a maker of philters rather than a knitter of stockings and sewer of shirts.

A maker of philters. Roughly speaking, that is Dionea's profession. She lives upon the money which I dole out to her (with many useless objurgations), on behalf of your Excellency; and her ostensible employment is mending nets, collecting olives, carrying bricks and other miscellaneous jobs; but her real status is that of village sorceress. You think our peasants are sceptical? Perhaps they do not believe in thought-reading, mesmerism and ghosts, like you, dear Lady Evelyn. But they believe very firmly in the evil eye, in magic, and in love potions. Every one has his little story of this or that which happened to his brother, or cousin or neighbour. My stable-boy and male factotum's brother-in-law, living some years ago in Corsica, was seized with a longing for a dance with his beloved at one of those balls which our peasants give in the winter, when the snow makes leisure in the mountains. A wizard anointed him for money; and straightway he turned into a black cat and in three bounds was over the seas at the door of his uncle's cottage, and among the dancers. He caught his beloved by the skirt to draw her attention; but she replied with a kick which sent him squealing back to Corsica. When he returned, in summer, he refused to marry the lady, and carried his left arm in a sling. "You broke it when I came to the Veglia!" he said, and all seemed explained. Another lad, returning from working in the vineyards near Marseilles, was walking up to his native village, high on our hills, one moonlight night. He heard sounds of fiddle and fife from a roadside barn, and saw a yellow light from its chinks; and then entering he found many women dancing, old and young, and among them, his affianced. He tried to snatch her round the waist for a waltz (they play *Madame Angot* at our rustic balls), but the girl was unclutchable and whispered: "Go, for these are witches who will kill thee, and I am a witch also, alas, and shall go to Hell when I die."

I could tell your Excellency dozens of such stories. But love philters are among the commonest things to sell and buy—do you remember the sad little story of Cervantes's licentiate, who instead of a love potion, drank a philter which made him think he was made of glass, fit emblem



of a poor mad poet?— It is love philters that Dionea prepares; no, do not misunderstand, they do not give love of her, still less her love; your seller of love charms is as cold as ice, as pure as snow. The priest has crusaded against her, and stones have flown at her as she went by, from dissatisfied lovers, and the very children, paddling in the sea and making mud pies in the sand, have put out forefinger and little finger and screamed: "Witch, witch, ugly witch!" as she passed with basket or brick load; but Dionea has only smiled, that snake-like, amused smile, but more ominous than of yore. The other day I determined to seek her and argue with her on the subject of her evil trade; Dionea has some regard for me, not, I fancy, a result of gratitude, but rather the recognition of a certain admiration and awe which she inspires in your Excellency's foolish old servant. She has taken up her abode in a deserted hut, built of dried reeds and thatch, such as they keep cows in, among the olives on the cliffs. She was not there, but about the hut pecked some white pigeons, and from it, startling me foolishly with its unexpected sound, came the eery bleat of her pet goat— Among the olives, it was twilight already, with streakings of faded rose in the sky, and faded rose, like long trails of petals, on the distant sea. I clambered down among the myrtle bushes and came to a little semicircle of yellow sand, between two high and jagged rocks, the place where the sea had deposited Dionea after the wreck. She was seated there on the sand, her bare foot dabbling in the waves; she had twisted a wreath of myrtle and wild roses on her black crisp hair. Near her was one of our prettiest girls, the Lena of Sor Tullio the blacksmith, with ashy terrified face under her flowered kerchief. I determined to speak to the child, but without startling her now, for she is a nervous, hysteric little thing. So I sat on the rocks, screened by the myrtle bushes, waiting till the girl had gone. Dionea, seated listless on the sands, leaned over the sea, and took some of its water in the hollow of her hand.

"Here," she said to the Lena of Sor Tullio, "fill your bottle with this, and give it to drink to Tommasino-the-Rosebud." Then she set to singing:

"Love is salt like sea water—I drink and I die of thirst—— Water! Water! yet the more I drink, the more I burn—Love! thou art as bitter as the sea-weed—"

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April 20th, 1887.

Your friends are settled here, dear Lady Evelyn. The house is built in what was once a Genoese fort, growing, like a grey spiked aloe, out of the marble rocks of our bay; rock and walls (the walls existed long before Genoa was ever heard of), grown almost into a homogeneous mass, delicate grey, stained with black and yellow lichen, and dotted here and there with myrtle shoots and crimson snapdragon. In what was once the highest enclosure of the fort, where your friend Gertrude watches the maids hanging out the fine white sheets and pillow-cases to dry (a bit of the North, of Hermann and Dorothea transferred to the South), a great twisted fig tree juts out like an eccentric gargoyle over the sea, and drops its ripe fruit into the deep blue pools. There is but scant furniture in the house, but a great oleander overhangs it, presently to burst into pink splendour; and on all the window-sills, even that of the kitchen (such a background of shining brass saucepans Waldemar's wife has made of it), are pipkins and tubs full of trailing carnations, and tufts of sweet basil and thyme and mignonette. She pleases me most, your Gertrude, although you foretold I should prefer the husband; with her thin white face, a Memling Madonna finished by some Tuscan sculptor, and her long, delicate white hands ever busy, like those of a mediæval lady, with some delicate piece of work; and the strange blue, more limpid than the sky and deeper than the sea, of her rarely lifted glance.

It is in her company that I like Waldemar best; I prefer to the genius that infinitely tender and respectful—I would not say *lover* yet I have no other word—of his pale wife. He seems to me, when with her, like some fierce generous wild thing from the woods, like the lion of Una, tame and submissive to this saint—— This tenderness is really very beautiful on the part of that big lion Waldemar, with his odd eyes as of some wild animal, odd, and your Excellency remarks, not without a gleam of latent ferocity. I think that hereby hangs the explanation

of his never doing any but male figures; the female figure, he says (and your Excellency must hold him responsible, not me, for such profanity), is almost inevitably inferior in strength and beauty; woman is not form, but expression, and therefore suits painting, but not sculpture. The point of a woman is not her body, but (and here his eyes rested very tenderly upon the thin white profile of his wife), her soul. Still, I answered, the ancients, who understood such matters, did manufacture some tolerable female statues: the Fates of the Parthenon, the Phidian Pallas, the Venus of Milo——

"Ah! yes," exclaimed Waldemar, smiling, with that savage gleam of his eyes, "but those are not *women*; and the people who made them have left us the tales of Endymion, Adonis, Anchises; a goddess might sit for them——"

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May 5th, 1887.

Has it ever struck your Excellency in one of your La Rochefoucauld fits (in Lent say, after too many balls), that not merely maternal but conjugal unselfishness may be a very selfish thing? There! you toss your little head at my words; yet I wager I have heard you say that *other* women may think it right to humour their husbands, but as to you, the Prince must learn that a wife's duty is as much to chasten her husband's whims as to satisfy them. I really do feel indignant that such a snow-white saint should wish another woman to part with all instincts of modesty, merely because that other woman would be a good model for her husband; really, it is intolerable. "Leave the girl alone," Waldemar said laughing, "what do I want with the unæsthetic sex, as Schopenhauer calls it." But Gertrude has set her heart on his doing a female figure; it seems that folk have twitted him with never having produced one. She has long been on the look-out for a model for him; it is odd to see this pale, demure, diaphanous creature, not the more earthly for approaching motherhood, scanning the girls of our village with the eyes of a slave-dealer.

"If you insist on speaking to Dionea," I said, "I shall insist on speaking to her at the same time to urge her to refuse your proposal." But Waldemar's pale wife was indifferent to all my speeches about



modesty being a poor girl's only dowry. "She will do for a Venus," she merely answered.

We went up to the cliffs together, after some sharp words, Waldemar's wife hanging on my arm, as we slowly clambered up the stony path among the olives. We found Dionea at the door of her hut, making faggots of myrtle branches. She listened sullenly to Gertrude's offer and explanations; indifferently to my admonitions not to accept. The thought of stripping for the view of a man, which would send a shudder through our most brazen village girls, seemed not to startle her, immaculate and savage as she is accounted. She did not answer, but sat under the olives, looking vaguely across the sea. At that moment Waldemar came up to us; he had followed with the intention of putting an end to these wranglings—

"Gertrude," he said, "do leave her alone—I have found a model—a fisher boy, whom I much prefer to any woman."

Dionea raised her head with that serpentine smile. "I will come," she said.

Waldemar stood silent; his eyes were fixed on her, where she stood under the olives, her white shift loose about her splendid throat, her shining feet bare in the grass. Vaguely, as if not knowing what he said, he asked her name. She answered that her name was Dionea; for the rest, she was an Innocentina, that is to say, a foundling; then she began to sing :

"Flower of the myrtle!  
My father is the starry sky;  
The mother that made me is the sea."

June 22nd, 1887.

I confess I was an old fool to have grudged Waldemar his model. As I watch him gradually building up his statue, watch the goddess gradually emerging from the clay heap, I ask myself—and the case might trouble a more subtle moralist than me—whether a village girl, an obscure useless life within the bounds of what we choose to call right and wrong, can be weighed against the possession by mankind of a great work of art, a Venus immortally beautiful? Still, I am glad that the

two alternatives need not be weighed against each other. Nothing can equal the kindness of Gertrude, now that Dionea has consented to sit to her husband; the girl is ostensibly merely a servant like any other; and, lest any report of her real functions should get abroad and discredit her at San Massimo, or Montemirto, she is to be taken to Rome, where no one will be the wiser, and where, by the way, your Excellency will have an opportunity of comparing Waldemar's goddess of love with our little orphan of the convent of the Stigmata. What reassures me still more is the curious attitude of Waldemar towards the girl. I could never have believed that an artist could regard a woman so utterly as a mere inanimate thing, a form to copy, like a tree or flower. Truly he carries out his theory that sculpture knows only the body, and the body scarcely considered as human. The way in which he speaks to Dionea after hours of the most rapt contemplation of her is almost brutal in its coldness—And yet to hear him exclaim: "How beautiful she is, good God, how beautiful!" no love of mere woman was ever so violent as this love of a woman's mere shape.

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June 24th, 1887.

You asked me once, dearest Excellency, whether there survived among our people (you had evidently added a volume on folk-lore to that heap of half cut, dog's-eared books that litter about among the Chinese-ries and mediæval brocades of your rooms), any trace of Pagan myths. I explained to you then that all our fairy tales are merely so much mythology, classic gods and demons and heroes turned into Fairies, Ogres and Princes. Last night I had a curious proof of this. Going to see the Waldemars, I found Dionea seated under the oleander at the top of the old Genoese fort, telling stories to the two little blond children, who were making the fallen pink blossoms into necklaces at her feet; the pigeons, Dionea's white pigeons which never leave her, strutting and pecking among the basil pots, and the white gulls flying round the rocks overhead. This is what I heard— "And the Three Fairies said to the Youngest Son of the King, to the one who had been brought up as a shepherd: 'Take this apple, and give it to her among us who is

the most beautiful.' And the First Fairy said : 'If thou give it to me, thou shalt be Emperor of Germany, and have purple clothes, and a gold crown, and gold armour, and horses, and courtiers.' And the Second said : 'If thou give it to me thou shalt be Pope, and wear a mitre and have the Keys of Heaven and Hell.' And the Third Fairy said : 'Give the apple to me, for I will give thee the most beautiful lady to wife.' And the Youngest Son of the King sat in the green meadow and thought about it a little, and then said : 'What use is there in being Emperor or Pope? Give me the beautiful lady to wife, since I am young myself.' And he gave the apple to the Third of the Three Fairies——"

Dionea droned out the story in her half Genoese dialect, her eyes looking far away across the blue sea, dotted with sails like white seagulls, that strange serpentine smile on her lips——

"Who told thee that fable?" I asked. She took a handful of oleander blossoms from the ground and throwing them in the air, answered listlessly, as she watched the little shower of rosy petals descend on her black hair and pale breast——"Who knows?"

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July 6th, 1887.

How strange is the power of Art. Has Waldemar's statue shown me the real Dionea, or has Dionea really grown more strangely beautiful than before? Your Excellency will laugh; but, when I meet her, I cast down my eyes after the first glimpse of her loveliness; not with the shyness of a ridiculous old pursuer of the Eternal Feminine, but with a sort of religious awe; the feeling with which, as a child, kneeling by my mother's side, I looked down on the church flags when the mass bell told the Elevation of the Host——

Do you remember the story of Zeuxis and the ladies of Crotona, five of the fairest not being too much for his Juno? Do you remember, you who have read everything, all the bosh of our writers about the Ideal in Art? Why, here is a girl who disproves all this nonsense in a minute; she is far, far more beautiful than Waldemar's statue of her.

He said so angrily, only yesterday, when his wife took me into his studio (he has made a studio of the long desecrated chapel of the old



Genoese fort, itself, they say, occupying the site of the temple of Venus). As he spoke, that odd spark of ferocity dilated in his eyes, and seizing the largest of his modelling tools, he obliterated at one swoop the whole exquisite face. Poor Gertrude turned ashy white, and a convulsion passed over her features——

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July 15th.

I wish I could make Gertrude understand, and yet I could never, never bring myself to say a word. As a matter of fact, what is there to be said? Surely she knows best that her husband will never love any woman but herself. Yet ill, nervous, as she is, I quite understand that she must loathe this unceasing talk of Dionea, of the superiority of the model over the statue. Cursed statue! I wish it were finished, or else that it had never been begun.

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July 20th.

This morning Waldemar came to me. He seemed strangely agitated; I guessed he had something to tell me, and yet I could never ask—Was it cowardice on my part? He sat in my shuttered room, the sunshine making pools on the red bricks and tremulous stars on the ceiling, talking of many things at random, and mechanically turning over the manuscript, the heap of notes of my poor never-finished book on the *Exiled Gods*.

Then he rose, and walking nervously round my study, talking disconnectedly about his work, his eye suddenly fell upon a little altar, one of my few antiquities, a little block of marble with a carved garland and rams' heads, and a half effaced inscription dedicating it to Venus, the mother of Love. "It was found," I explained, "in the ruins of the temple, somewhere on the site of your studio; so at least the man said from whom I bought it." Waldemar looked at it long: "So," he said, "this little cavity was to burn the incense in; or rather, I suppose, since it has two little gutters running into it, for collecting the blood of the victim? Well, well, they were wiser in that day, to wring the neck of a pigeon, or burn a pinch of incense, than to eat

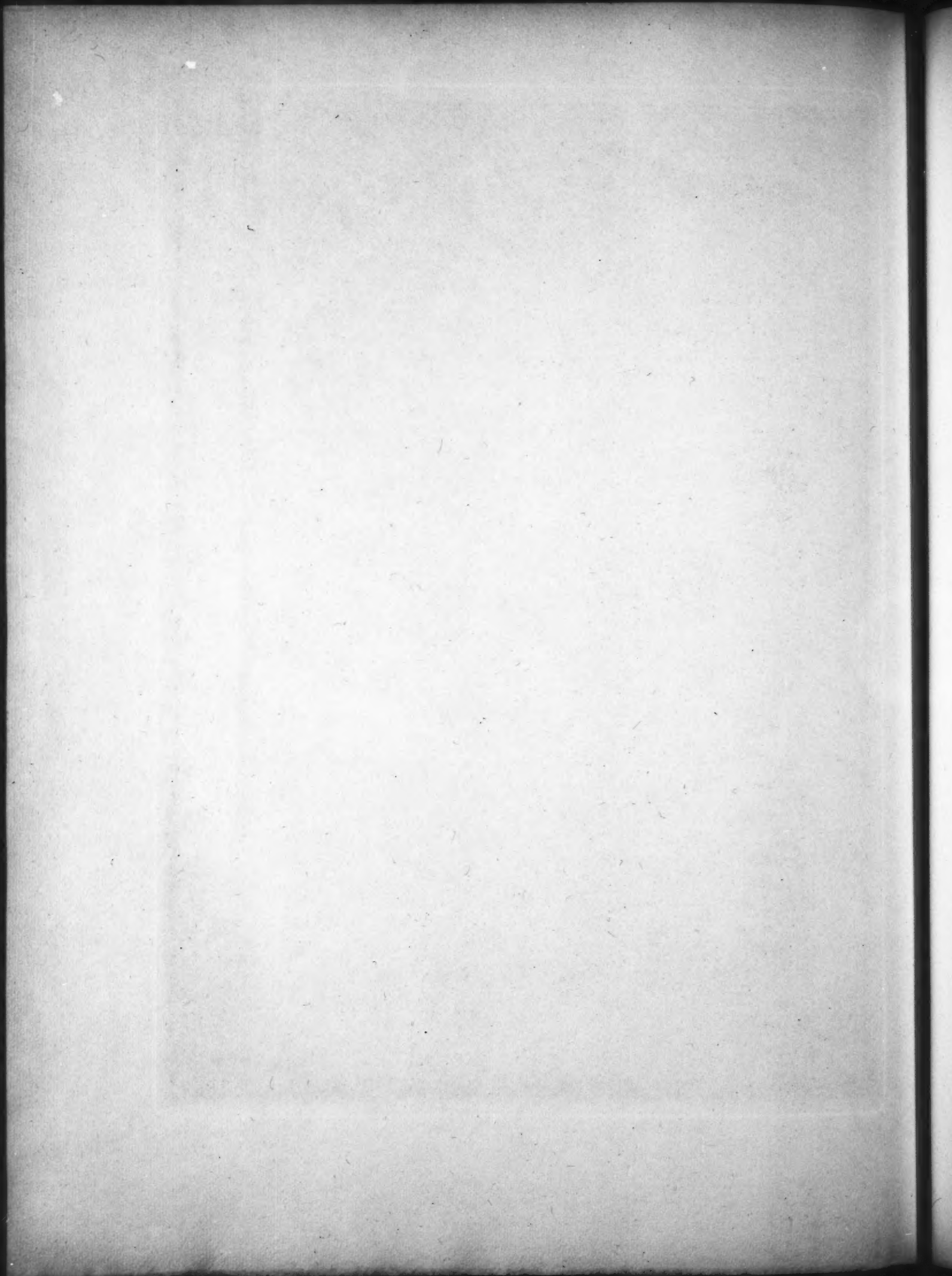








THE GREEK GODDESS ATHENA, BY PHIDIAS, MARBLE, 450 B.C., METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK



their own hearts out, as we do, all along of Dame Venus"—and he laughed, and left me with that odd ferocious lighting up of his face. Presently there came a knock at my door. It was Waldemar. "Doctor," he said very quietly, "will you do me a favour? Lend me your little Venus altar—only for a few days, only till the day after to-morrow. I want to copy the design of it for the pedestal of my statue; it is appropriate." I sent the altar to him; the lad who carried it told me that Waldemar had set it up in the studio, and calling for a flask of wine, poured out two glasses. One he had given to my messenger for his pains; of the other he had drunk a mouthful, and thrown the rest over the altar, saying some unknown words. "It must be some foreign habit," said my servant. What odd fancies this man has!

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July 25th.

You ask me, dearest Excellency, to send you some sheets of my book; you want to know what I have discovered. Alas, dear Donna Evelina, I have discovered, I fear, that there is nothing to discover; that Apollo was never in Styria; that Chaucer, when he called the Queen of the Fairies Proserpina, meant nothing more than an eighteenth century poet when he called Dolly or Betty Cynthia or Amaryllis; that the lady who damned poor Tannhäuser was not Venus, but a mere little Swabian mountain sprite; in fact that poetry is only the invention of poets, and that that rogue Heinrich Heine is entirely responsible for the existence of *Dieux en Exil*— My poor manuscript can tell you only what St. Augustine, Tertullian and sundry morose old Bishops thought about the loves of Father Zeus and the miracles of the Lady Isis, none of which is much worth your attention. Alas! Reality, my dear Lady Evelyn, is always prosaic; at least when investigated into by bald old gentlemen like me.

And yet, it does not look so. The world, at times, seems to be playing at being poetic, mysterious, full of wonder and romance. I am writing as usual by my window, the moonlight brighter in its whiteness than my mean little yellow shining lamp. From the mysterious greyness of olive groves and lanes beneath my terrace, rises a confused quaver



of frogs, and buzz and whirr of insects; something, in sound, like the vague trails of countless stars, the galaxies on galaxies blurred into mere blue shimmer by the moon, which rides slowly across the highest heaven. The olive twigs glisten in the rays; the flowers of the pomegranate and oleander are only veiled as with bluish mist in their scarlet and rose. In the sea is another sea of molten rippled silver, or a magic causeway leading to the shining vague offing, the luminous pale sky line, where the islands of Palmaria and Tino float like unsubstantial, shadowy dolphins. The roofs of Montemirto glimmer among the black pointing cypresses; further below, at the end of that half-moon of land, is San Massimo; the Genoese fort inhabited by our friends is profiled black against the sky. All is dark; our fisher folk go to bed early; Gertrude and the little ones are asleep; they at least are, for I can imagine Gertrude lying awake, the moonbeams on her thin Madonna face, smiling as she thinks of the little ones around her, of the other tiny thing that will soon lie on her breast— There is a light in the old desecrated chapel, the thing that was once the temple of Venus, they say, and is now Waldemar's workshop, its broken roof mended with reeds and thatch. Waldemar has stolen in, no doubt, to see his statue again. But he will return, more peaceful for the peacefulness of the night, to his sleeping wife and children. God bless and watch over them! Good-night, dearest Excellency.

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July 26th.

I have your Excellency's telegram in answer to mine. Many thanks for sending the Prince. I await his coming with feverish longing; it is still something to look forward to, all does not seem over; and yet what can he do?

The children are safe; we fetched them out of their bed and brought them up here. They are still a little shaken by the fire, the bustle, and by finding themselves in a strange house; also, they want to know where their mother is; but they have found a tame cat, and I hear them chirping on the stairs.

It was only the roof of the studio, the reeds and thatch, that burned,

and a few old pieces of timber. Waldemar must have set fire to it with great care; he had brought armfuls of faggots of dry myrtle and heather from the bakehouse close by, and thrown into the blaze quantities of pine cones, and of some resin, I know not what, that smelt like incense. When we made our way, early this morning, through the smouldering studio, we were stifled with a hot church-like perfume; my brain swam and I suddenly remembered going into St. Peter's on Easter Day as a child.

It happened last night, while I was writing to you. Gertrude had gone to bed, leaving her husband in the studio; about eleven, the maids heard him come out and call to Dionea to get up and come and sit to him. He had had this craze once before, of seeing her and his statue by an artificial light; you remember he had theories about the way in which the ancients lit up the statues in their temples. Gertrude, the servants say, was heard creeping downstairs a little later.

Do you see it? I have seen nothing else these hours, which have seemed weeks and months. He had placed Dionea on the big marble block behind the little altar, a great curtain of dull red brocade—you know that Venetian brocade with the gold pomegranate pattern—behind her like a Madonna of Van Eyck's; he showed her to me once before like this, the whiteness of her neck and breast, the whiteness of the drapery round her flanks toned to the colour of old marble by the light of the resin burning in pans all round— Before Dionea was the altar, the altar of Venus which he had borrowed from me. He must have collected all the roses about it, and thrown the incense upon the embers when Gertrude suddenly entered. And then, and then—

We found her lying across the altar, her pale hair among the ashes of the incense, her blood—she had but little to give, poor white ghost—trickling among the carved garlands and rams' heads, blackening the heaped up roses.

The body of Waldemar was found at the foot of the castle cliff. Had he hoped, by setting the place on fire, to bury himself among its ruins, or had he not rather wished to complete in this way the sacrifice, to make the whole temple an immense votive pyre? It looked like one,

as we hurried down the hills to San Massimo; the whole hill-side, dry grass, myrtle and heather, all burning, the pale short flames waving against the blue moonlight sky, and the old fortress outlined black against the blaze.

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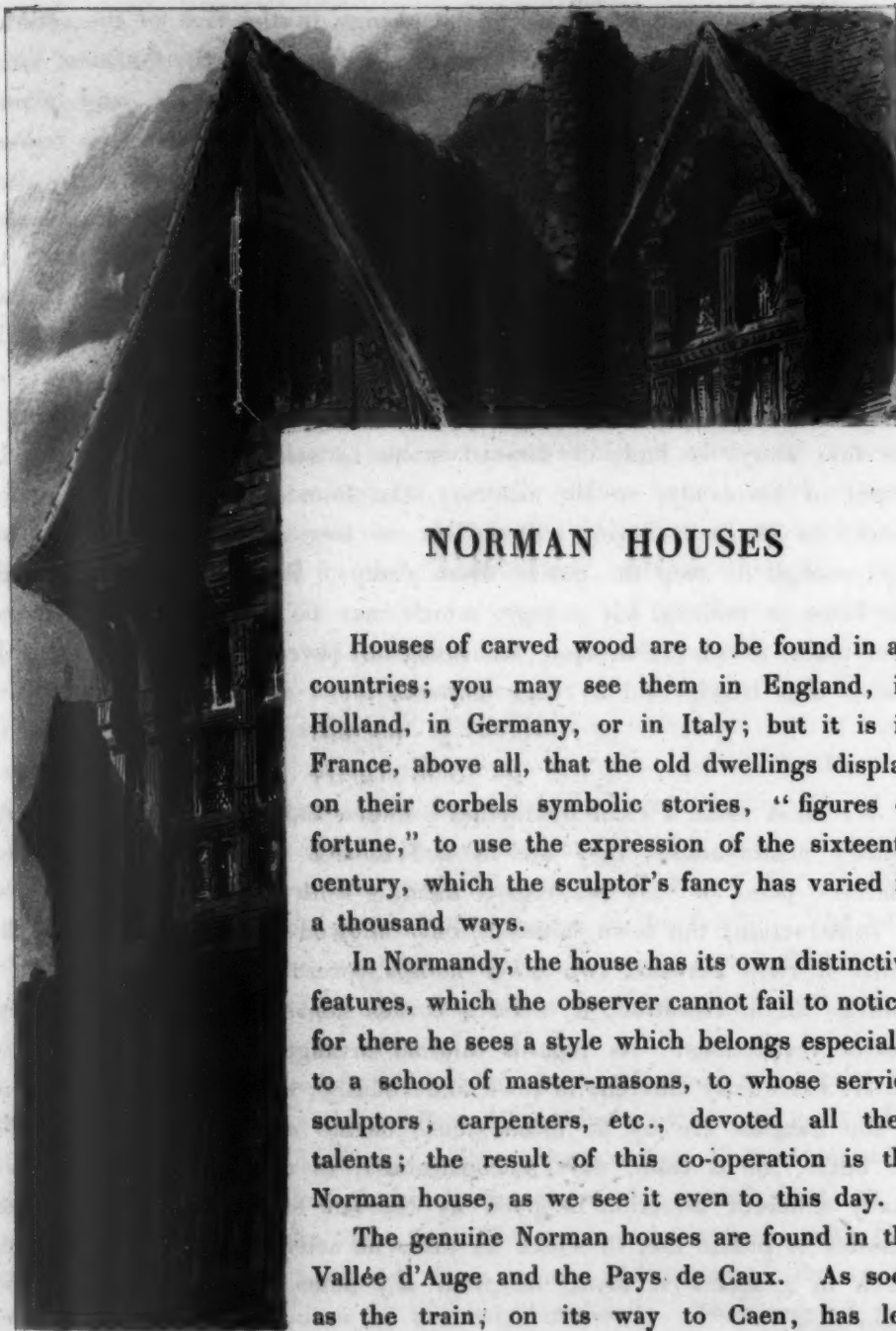
August 30th.

Of Dionea I can tell you nothing certain. We speak of her as little as we can. Some say they have seen her, on stormy nights, wandering among the cliffs; but a sailor boy assures me by all the holy things that the day after the burning of the castle chapel—we never call it anything else—he met at dawn, off the island of Palmaria, beyond the strait of Porto Venere, a Greek boat, with eyes painted on the prow, going full sail to sea, the men singing as she went. And against the mast, a robe of purple and gold about her, and a myrtle wreath on her head, leaned Dionea, singing words in an unknown tongue, the white pigeons circling about her.

VERNON LEE.







## NORMAN HOUSES

Houses of carved wood are to be found in all countries; you may see them in England, in Holland, in Germany, or in Italy; but it is in France, above all, that the old dwellings display on their corbels symbolic stories, "figures of fortune," to use the expression of the sixteenth century, which the sculptor's fancy has varied in a thousand ways.

In Normandy, the house has its own distinctive features, which the observer cannot fail to notice, for there he sees a style which belongs especially to a school of master-masons, to whose service sculptors, carpenters, etc., devoted all their talents; the result of this co-operation is the Norman house, as we see it even to this day.

The genuine Norman houses are found in the Vallée d'Auge and the Pays de Caux. As soon as the train, on its way to Caen, has left

Bernay, the traveller begins to see a change in the face of the country; the tilled fields of the Isle of France, the forests of the Norman Vexin, are succeeded by rich pasture land intersected by rivers, and planted with apple trees; grass of the most vivid green covers the alluvial meadows of marly subsoil, in which stone is absolutely wanting. It is there, in a country where the workmen were obliged to accommodate themselves to the necessities of the situation, that we must trace the development of this style of architecture, a style not indigenous to the place, though it was forced to undergo certain modifications imposed by the absolute want of materials of the first necessity.

In the wooden houses of other countries, all the ground-floor, up to the first story, is built of dressed stone or solid masonry; but in this corner of Normandy, on the contrary, the foundations which rest, so to speak, on the soil, barely rise a foot or two above ground, only just high enough to keep the purlins from damp. From that point upwards, the house is nothing but a cage, which may be taken down and moved from place to place; in fact, archæologists have often been puzzled by houses thus transported by their owners.

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We must make a clear distinction between the town dwelling and the country manor-house; they are as unlike each other as possible, from whatever point of view we regard them. With respect to general plan of construction, the town house is only allowed a limited space, within which it rises between two other houses, presenting, with their aid, a frontage all in elevation; if it be a corner house, it is subject to even greater restrictions. As regards internal arrangement, the conditions of life are essentially different in town and country; the manners and customs of the burgher are by no means those of the country gentleman. For the latter, life is calm, easy, unconstrained; to the life of the former a totally different direction is given by the stir of business, the thousand episodes of public life, in which he takes an active part, the daily events, which in a mediæval town, far from any other centre, are of supreme importance.

What need is there, in the town, for vast apartments, spacious halls in which friends can assemble? If the master of the house is a shop-keeper, his treasures are piled up in the basement, half underground; there he holds his receptions, behind his counter, there he hears and retails the news of the day when the weather does not admit of his standing in the street; and then again, the vast overhanging cornice is there, which the architect has planned to protect him from sun and rain.

The street is narrow and the shop gloomy; accordingly it is under this cornice that he establishes his place of business, and shows off his wares; so that in course of time he claims by right of conquest to occupy the whole street, and the most stringent edicts can scarcely succeed in making him understand that the public have a right of way. Roads are bad and carriages rare; locomotion is performed on horseback; what need is there then, for those wide streets, without which life seems impossible nowadays? The cornice surmounting the first-floor is succeeded by that of the second, then comes the upper story, the garret, and crowning all, the dormer-windows, making the street into a sort of well, growing narrower towards the top, alive from top to bottom with a whole population of busy men and women; busy yet calm, unless the Normans of that day were altogether unlike their descendants; time is of no value in their eyes, and long discussions, interminable conferences, are held under a sky that is often rainy, beneath the shelter of the advancing roofs, which thus take the place of the arcades of the South. The latter afford protection from the sun, the former from rain. Is not this twofold advance a gain of ground, is it not a modest increase of territory without expenditure?

We are speaking here of the commercial streets, lined with stalls and shops, where the trade-guilds, collected in close proximity to each other, keep up a healthy and legitimate competition amongst themselves; other streets, more tranquil, through which the clatter of a horse's hoof, or the rat-tat of a heavy door-knocker, was enough to send a tremor, were filled with houses of greater size, but less ornate, and occupied during the winter by the small squires of the neighbourhood. They wanted more



space, accustomed as they were to large country mansions, and their dwellings form a class midway between the regular town house and the country mansion. We shall not linger over them, they exhibit equally the characteristics of the other two classes. The wealth of the proprietor is indicated by some tall slender columns adorned with carving and a scutcheon on a Gothic door of interlaced panels, on which a wrought-iron knocker gleams.

Here is one of these old Lisieux houses which has best preserved its mediæval aspect. All seems, even at this day, to belong to another age, and you might almost expect to see, on the door-step of his shop, a man in a short coat, with his wide shoes, a cap on his head, offering you his wares.

The ground-floor windows are closed by a grating, less complicated, certainly, than those of the Rue des Prouvaires, as described by Guillebert de Metz in his description of Paris, under cover of which one could speak to those outside "if need be, without fear of a chance shot." But behind it we expect even now to see the graceful head-dress of the chandler's daughter, as she gazes at the long procession wending its way to church.

The windows, let into the walls at the intervals between the uprights, are very narrow. The builder's art has not yet risen to the height of fixing the battens in lozenge form, a plan we see first adopted in the sixteenth century; when that period is reached, wider openings will be found necessary, windows, and not mere apertures; later, in the seventeenth century, such a pitch of development is attained that finally large bays of glass fill the whole space of the panel. The house then resembles a lantern, and generations which have lived in the very extreme of darkness, are succeeded by their children, who demand the opposite extreme of light.

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At the end of the fifteenth century the old Gothic sentiment, with all its characteristics, makes a new effort in Normandy; at the time when Michel Colomb is carving on the Loire, at Nantes, the tomb of Duke

Francis II, that wide page which tells us the realistic power of his chisel, the old French *fabliaux* recover, together with their ancient iconography, the old popularity which they had lost. Chanticleer the cock, Fauvel the fox, come back to life, and not only in cathedrals, on the stalls and woodwork do they show their frequently incongruous faces, but in house construction, the old Norman fables of beasts indicate by their appearance the reaction which is taking place at this epoch.

All these uprights; all these jambs appeal to the sculptor's chisel, but though some proprietors raise handsome houses, only very few have the means to cover completely with carving all the wood which appears. The houses in which the beam-heads and brackets are hidden by modillions are common; those on the other hand are rare, which like the old house of the Salamander, resemble a large chest of the sixteenth century, resting on stout pillars, between which the tradesman opens his place of business.

The roof is crowned with a vast dormer-window, so wide sometimes as to occupy the whole length of the house-front, but without being a gable; supported as it is on a sort of corbel, it seems an adjunct, it is only one more room gained in height; it reappears in the mansard roof of the seventeenth century.

But the weight of the house must be lightened, the wall must necessarily be made less thick, the mason calls the slater to his aid, and the latter adorns this new portion of the front, either with tiles in all shades of vermillion, or slates ingeniously cut, or a delicate wooden shingle, furnishing with its scallop or lozenge work, and its quarries artistically interlaced, a new motive in decoration. At the window, stout iron rings support the long wooden poles on which the housewife hangs her clothes to dry, and the sunbeam glancing on these red and yellow petticoats, mingled along with table-cloths and sheets, gives, just as at Genoa or Venice, a festal air to the poorest dwellings, while the pinnacle which surmounts the roof mingles the harmony of its brilliant enamel with the warm tints of the tiling.

In the South all is done to guard against the sun; in Normandy it is the rain that must be provided against; accordingly the roofs overhang

the walls of the house in an exaggerated fashion; this projection must be supported by long spars jutting out, and the builder, under whose hand the smallest surface of wood is made to wear an artistic aspect, developes on two grimacing corbels that graceful Gothic arcade, which crowns in so happy a manner the tracery of the wooden panel.

When a story is not protected by a projection of the cornice above, a sort of small penthouse of tiles or slates shelters the window from the rain which would otherwise beat in.

The interior is not brightened up, according to our notions; the narrow sash-window lets but little daylight filter through, and this little is made still less by the roofs and penthouses; the rooms are made quite small, and badly arranged; a semi-darkness prevails continually, but this dim twilight is broad daylight for the skilled workman, who devotes himself in the gloomy depths of his shop, to the most delicate kinds of work. What fine lace-work, what delicate chasings spring up under the fingers of these artificers, in an atmosphere in which we could scarcely see a seat offered to us, and which never a poor ray of sunlight comes to cheer!

But for an apprentice, life is full of the bright future; he knows that in his turn he will become a master when he has produced his masterpiece, and the master has but one care, namely, to leave unsullied to his children the reputation of the shop whose sign is the *Petit Saint-Georges*, or the *Truie qui file*.

\* \* \*

The manor-house is altogether different. Scarcely does a light column of smoke betray a human habitation amid the verdure which the apple blossoms in the spring paint with large spots of pink. We must go and search for it, as in a nest of green, cosily nestling at the foot of the hill which shelters it from the sea breeze. Let us advance on the carpet of fresh green which slopes gently down to the pond, in the middle of an avenue of flowering trees, which sow the rosy flakes of their petals on the evening breeze. Calm reigns; in the grass, the beautiful cattle are grazing, scarcely lifting their heads as the stranger passes by; the barking of dogs













is heard, which shews that the master of the house is a sportsman, and that in the woods which surround his home, he finds wherewithal to gratify his hunting tastes.

The inhabitant of the manor-house is not bellicose; but let war come, let his lord summon him, and he will take down the heavy sword that his forefathers have used, he will shew that the name he bears, a name which will hereafter be inscribed on the tablet of Dives, is not degenerate, and that the war-cry of Duke William finds an echo in his heart; but war is not his profession. Combats and strife he leaves to others, to the great lords, whose stone fortresses and moats filled with water keep them safe from fear of a sudden attack; what he longs for is a peaceful, tranquil life, such as the Hundred Years' War has not accustomed him to; he longs to enjoy peace, and it is to his manor-house that he comes to seek it.

The manor-house is somewhat difficult to define; it is not a castle, nor yet a simple dwelling-house; the old Norman term "habitable house" is not at all applicable to it. If the proprietor is not in every case noble, at all events he is a free man, owing homage to none but his feudal lord, and free to build on his land, though not to erect defensive works.

With what care, then, he constructs his house! In the interior there is little variety; on the ground-floor is the great entrance-hall, communicating directly with the outside; by the side of this comes the kitchen, and at the back the staircase, in a turret by itself, but giving quite a distinctive character to all these buildings, by the lightness which it lends to the arrangements of the edifice. The exterior, on the other hand, shews many varieties; here there is no check, as in the town, on the free development of construction, and every one follows his own fancy, some preferring the gable, others the dormer-window, others the turret-staircase; each of them then requiring the sculptor, perhaps a man of more skill and taste than him whose work we have seen in the town, to cover the faces of his house with ornamentation after his taste. The heavy mullions, which in the town house of the fifteenth century bisect the narrow windows, are made more slender, and become ultimately

delicate pieces of wood loaded with scolloping; be the mansion large or small, whether it date from the fifteenth or sixteenth century, every part of it is worthy of being studied and examined, for all is wrought with care and finish, and the long lapse of years has seen a succession of artists who have been inspired by the love of art, rather than the love of gain.

In the vast hall on the basement the country gentleman passes, so to speak, his whole life. This hall, more constantly filled with life, perhaps, than the hall of a great castle, sees all its master's friends succeed each other. From vassal to lord, all are welcome there, and if the wooden bench is set aside for the peasant, the lord has his high chair, furnished with iron corner-plates and shoulder-pieces.

Noël du Fail, *Sieur de la Hérissaye*, in his "*Discours d'Eutrapel*," has left us a very charming description of one of these old manor-houses, which we must reproduce in his old vivid language. "Inside the hall the stag's horn, iron-tipped and suspended from the ceiling, from which hangs an array of caps, hats, fire-arms, couples and leashes for the dogs, and the great rosary for the vulgar. And on the dresser, or sideboard with two shelves, the Holy Bible in the translation ordered by King Charles V more than two hundred years ago, '*Les quatre fils Aymon*,' '*Ogier the Dane*,' '*Melusine*,' the '*Shepherd's Calendar*,' '*The Golden Legend*,' '*The Romance of the Rose*.' Behind the great door, many long and great hawking-poles, and at the lower end of the hall, the staves pierced and secured to the wall, half-a-dozen bows with their quivers and arrows, two fine large bucklers, two short, broad-bladed swords, two halberds, two pikes, twenty-two feet long, two or three coats of mail in the little coffer filled with bran, two stout cross-bows unstrung, with their gaffles and quarrels inside, and on the great window-sill over the fireplace three arquebusses, and hard by the perch for the sparrow-hawk, and lower down at the side of the tunnel, clap-nets, snares, nets, springes, and other engines of the chase.

"And under the great bench of the hall, three feet in width, beautiful fresh straw for bedding the hounds, which are better in strength and vigour for being able to hear and scent their master. For the rest, two

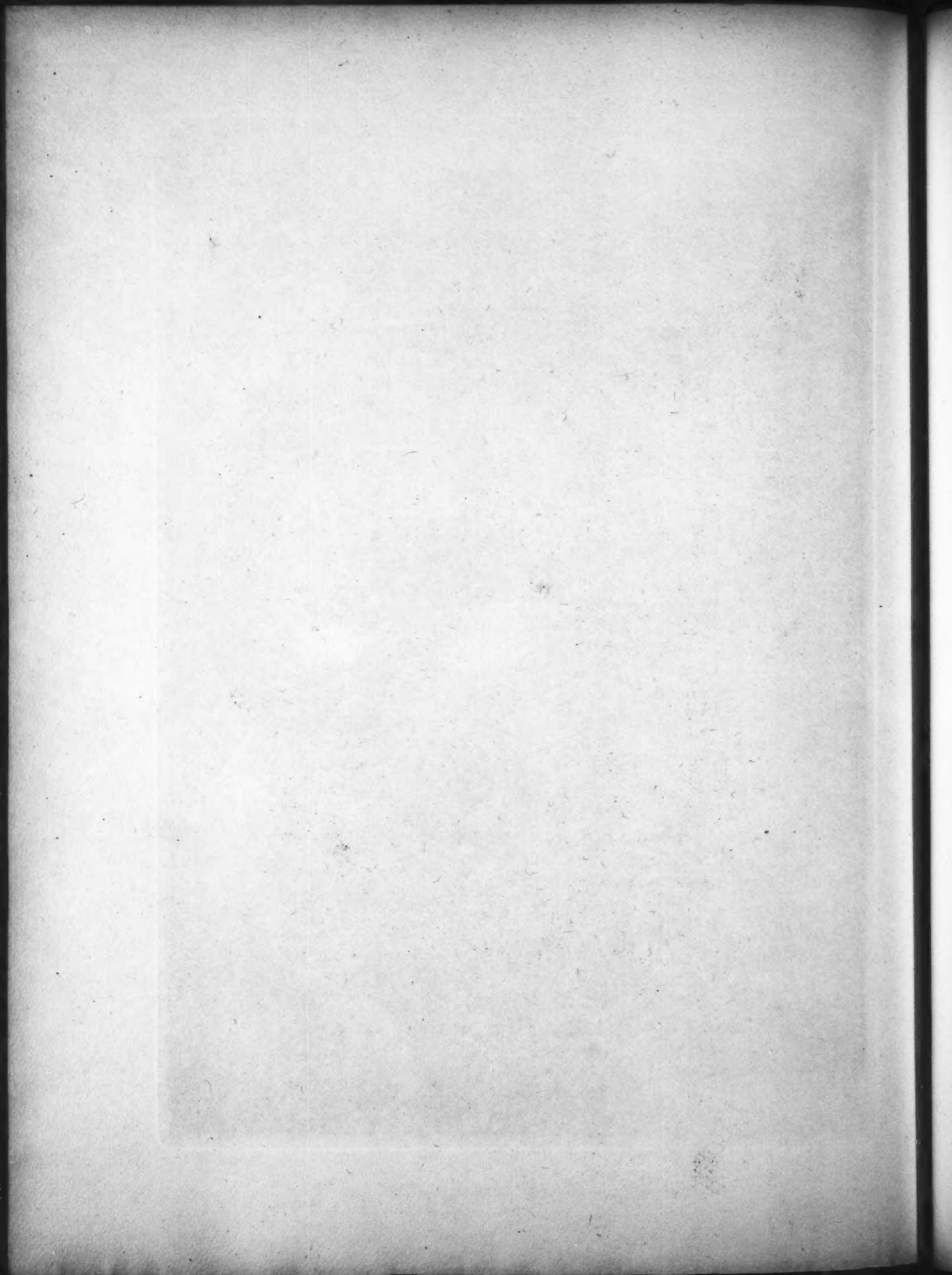












fairly good rooms for chance comers and strangers, and on the hearth good logs of green wood furnished with one or two dry faggots to make the fire last a good long time."

On the tall andirons his tin porringer is warming, and the squire, as he rests his elbows on the great table in the middle of the hall, and eats the porridge of which the Normans were so fond that they were nicknamed *bouilleux de farine*, looks through the leaden casements of his window and sees the pond fringed with reeds and rushes where the stream, near which the manor-house is built, slumbers for a moment before passing on to swell the neighbouring brook. Great swans float lazily upon it, and the busy water-fowl disturb in their indolence the frogs which show like green spots amid the water-lilies on the liquid mirror.

The spiral staircase leads us to the bedroom. The furniture is scanty; but the carvers have spent long days in cutting out the panels of the bed and of the marriage-chest. Flamboyant traceries are succeeded by the mythology and history of the Renaissance; the sacrifice of Abraham, the adventures of Jonah, Apollo and the Muses, surrounded by fanciful arabesques, adorn the chest in which the linen of the household is locked up; this does not seem to have filled much space, to judge from the inventories of the time; a few sheets, a few table-napkins, formed the whole stock of linen, even of a great castle, side by side with the great quantities of cloth of gold, silk, and luxurious silver plate of this epoch.

The Normans appreciated at an early stage, before others perhaps—and they seem to be indebted for it to their Italian expeditions—the gaiety and richness of those enamelled tiles of brilliant colours, which recall the mosaics and textile fabrics of the East. Accordingly no sooner are the manufactories of the Lisieux district of the Pré d'Auge and of Manerbe established, succeeding those of the Molay-Bacon at the beginning of the sixteenth century, than they see an era of prosperity open, which they owe to their bursting forth into such gay and harmonious tones in the brilliant colours of their productions. At a later date we shall see earthenware tiles mingled with the external struts of wood whose dull, neutral tint will make their decorations stand out all the more vigorously.

On all sides of a manor-house rise the offices. Here the dairy and cheese-room, there the wine-press and the cellars, so that the squire can see his people at work from his door; in the middle, breaking the monotony of the straight lines, is the octagonal pigeon-house, which in Norman architecture holds a by no means insignificant place. It indicates the importance of the property, for here the right of keeping pigeons does not belong only to the nobility; it is a territorial right, much more than a right of seignior. How pretty its gable is with its double roof, surmounted by the earthenware pinnacle, and broken by large dormer-windows, well arranged so as to shelter the pigeons! In between the wooden uprights are tiles tastefully arranged, making patches of red against the white mortar, and the wooden frame-wall encloses with its sombre line this new kind of chequerwork. On the roofs are peacocks of variegated hue, whose tails, with their ever-changing reflections, relieve the red roofing of the tiles with touches of emerald; they are watching with inquisitive eyes the young daughter of the squire, as she gathers roses in the garden to put in her hair; those roses of which the Normans were so proud.

We are speaking of the sixteenth century. Never could this artistic epoch have given birth to the castle of Grandchamp, which has remained to our days as the type of the eccentricity of an architect of the seventeenth century; so badly arranged, so strangely inconvenient, that the Marquesses of Saint-Julien, its proprietors, were obliged to build by its side, in the eighteenth century, a stone mansion of a more habitable kind. It was far in fact from resembling that beautiful manor-house of Belleau, demolished only a few years ago, perhaps the most curious in all Normandy. Not a morsel of wood uncarved, not a single beam-head which had not its scutcheon. At first there is the stag-hunt with all its varied fortunes; should the beam happen not to be thick enough, for example, to represent the huntsman standing upright; why, then he is made lying down. The dogs are those of King Modus. Then we find the legend of the Fox and the Ape, and all round about siren-lizards, screech-owls, hares, serpents, tortoises, which are only illustrations of the fables of William the Norman. The carver has left to abbeys and churches the lays of Aristotle and



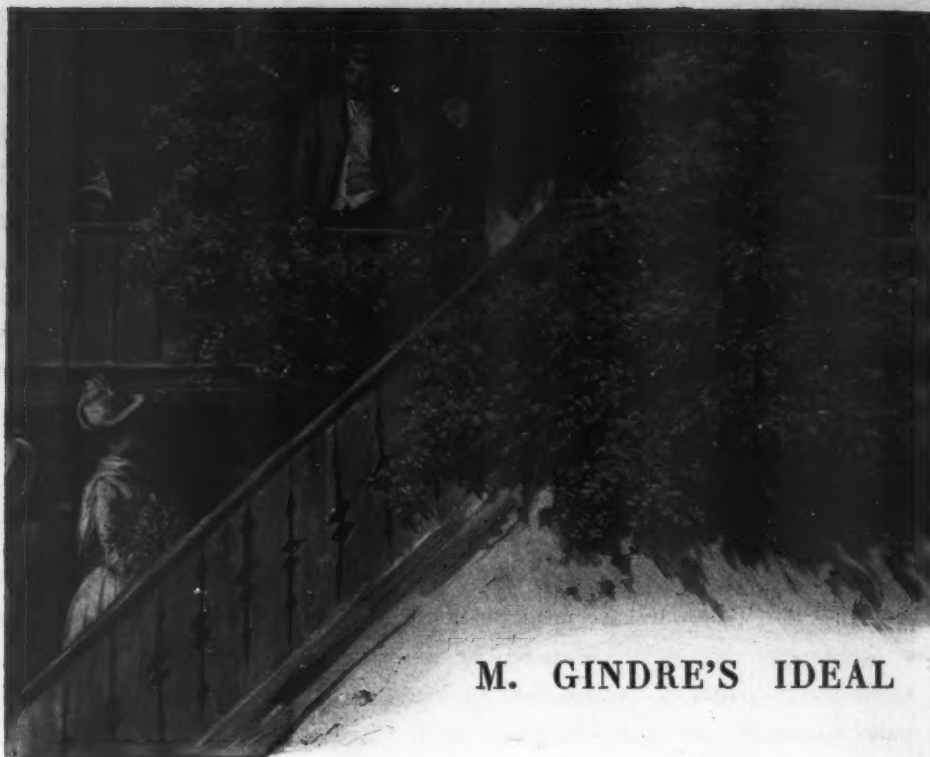
Virgil, so gay in their composition, but of too lofty a philosophy; the owner required subjects which he could understand; there can be nothing simpler than the chase and the animals which he comes across every day.

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All these traces of past time are unhappily destined to disappear in the immediate future. In the town, what is spared by the making of new streets, will be demolished by the owner; in the country, these old buildings are falling into decay and ruin, they want repairs, they are uncomfortable, so the owner builds another house. A few years more, and of all these old habitations, so picturesque as they are, nothing will be left but the remembrance; it is therefore almost a final leave that we take of them to-day.

F. DE MÉLY.





## M. GINDRE'S IDEAL

### I

#### THE "CHAMOIS"

On the evening in question which followed a magnificent July day and promised an equally fine to-morrow, great animation prevailed at the *table d'hôte* of the "Chamois," the little inn of a small station on the Valaisan Alps. The dinner bell had sounded rather late, as the meal had been delayed for a party of about twenty people who had started before day-break to ascend the Luisin, and who at last returned hot and covered with dust, bearing a perfect harvest of wonderful flowers; red clusters of rhododendrons shone out from among their brilliantly green leaves, the large saffron-coloured stars of the arnica, gentians blue, lilac, and yellow, chrysanthemums with violet petals arising curiously from their yellow centres, lilies from the graceful stems of which swing blossoms very like those of the snowdrop; all the most beautiful specimens of the Alpine flora, of which there is so rich and infinite a variety of colours;

mosses of every shade of green, delicate grasses, and the pale, mysterious soldanella or bindweed, with its bee-like petals, plucked from the edge of some snow-drift where alone they are to be found, flowers frail as those of the sensitive plant, and which fade if a hand touches them. For a minute outside the inn was a tumult of laughter, animated conversation, cries, reproaches addressed to the lazy ones, who remained behind to wander about the village, then a dispersion took place to the various rooms from which the guests could soon be heard, through the open windows and the light wooden partitions which served as walls, making a hasty toilet before dinner. The meal was a gay one, every one ate the weak soup which had neither colour nor flavour, and after that the inevitable stew, served with cinnamon sauce, and consisting of ingredients the nature of which was a profound mystery, without grumbling at what he swallowed, with an appetite sharpened by twelve hours' walk, by hard climbing and giddy slides on frozen ground, and by the exciting air of the mountain heights. The host looked on placidly, while his wife waited at table with a slowness habitual to her. She was assisted by the servant Josette, a girl mountain-born, but polished and wakened into activity by a life spent in a town, without whose assistance she would certainly have never finished supplying her hungry guests. Suddenly there was a pause, and Josette was observed to place a plate on the table which served as sideboard, and to gesticulate a moment before the door, ushering in a new comer. He was a man of five and thirty, soberly dressed in a well-made suit of grey; the lower part of his pale and distinguished-looking face was covered with a thin beard, and his bald head was garnished with a few locks of fair hair. His manner was mild, shy, and gave one the impression that he was a man who could not possibly appreciate a joke. He wiped his forehead nervously as he entered and cast furtive glances, as if of apology for disturbing them, at the assembled company, who were staring at him fork in hand, moved to silence by a sudden feeling of curiosity. He blushed when Josette indicated the seat which had been reserved for him at the bottom of the table, between two young ladies. As he sat down he bowed to his neighbours, who responded by an almost imperceptible movement



of the head. He waited a long time for his soup, which when it was at last brought was lukewarm and greasy. Before he had swallowed three spoonfuls his neighbour on the left turned to him, and said with a foreign accent, and in a tone which was almost imperative : "Pass the salt, if you please, sir."

The sound of her voice struck him. It was energetic and very womanly, but had in it a strange mixture of sharp vibrations; while doing her bidding he hurriedly glanced at the young lady.

Her face was like her voice, unusual; without real beauty it was attractive, and without any definable reason it appeared to be sympathetic. Its pallor was lighted up by brilliant and very dark eyes, and its features were extremely mobile, so that the mouth, nose, eyes and forehead—a pretty, arched forehead with a delicate contour just veiled by tendrils of soft hair—seemed to be in perpetual motion. She wore a grey tailor-made gown which was stylish, although perfectly plain, strong, and suitable to be worn on excursions during which it would have to brave dust and rain. A minute afterwards he heard her speaking in a low voice to the lady seated at her left, and knew at once from her accent that she was an American, a discovery which served to increase his interest in the fair stranger. She was complaining in a tone of lively impatience of the badness of the waiting at table, and the other lady listened to her with a coaxing air, as if she was accustomed to encounter little outbreaks of bad temper. Again and again the young lady turned towards M. Gindre, asking him first for mustard, then for water, and afterwards for dessert, speaking always in the same manner, which in spite of its imperativeness was not offensive.

M. Gindre did not have an opportunity for opening a conversation with his neighbour on the right hand, an English girl who, during the meal, only addressed a few remarks to a white-haired lady of irreproachable aspect who sat opposite to her. One could see that both of them had dressed with as much care to sit down to this deal table, in the low room with its whitewashed walls, as if they had been going to take their meal in a Kensington dining-room. The old lady was tall, thin, and solidly built, with a face which was young in spite of the silver

hair which surmounted it. The young lady was one of those pale beauties so often seen in England, with the regular features and gravity of manner which characterise the Anglo-Saxon race, a beauty which at first surprises, only exercises its peculiar charm slowly, and which seems to indicate a high moral tone and uprightness of soul. When his shyness had worn off, M. Gindre, who was an admirer of all things English, began to feel very pleased at the good luck which had assigned to him the seat he occupied, and at the end of the meal he introduced himself to his neighbours. He then learned that the two Americans were a Mrs. Ebson and her daughter Maud, and that the elder English lady was a Miss Webster, who was travelling with her niece Ellen. These particulars were rapidly communicated while rising from table.

The postman had just come; he was a good-looking young fellow born in the district, placid and slow as seems to be the disposition of those who live in the mountains, and he was attired in a bright blue vest with gilt buttons. He carried all his budget in his hand, and searched among the letters and papers directly he saw the person to whom one was addressed, a little confused by the crowd which pressed round him eager for news. Then all sat down outside the inn on benches and chairs, while the children, who were quite unmanageable, got up a number of noisy games, and filled the air with their shouts.

The last ray of sun which had lighted upon the steeple of the church disappeared; and dusk gradually invaded the place. One after another the washerwomen ceased beating their linen in the basin of the rustic fountain, and groups of heavy-looking and silent men took up positions in front of the shoemaker's house, which forms one angle of the square, staring at the strangers, and now and then exchanging a few words with each other in their hard *patois*. A tourist interrupted them for a moment to ask where to find the guide Bochaty. The children, after many expostulations, were at last carried off to bed, and silence—the sympathetic silence of the mountains which seems to envelope one, and to mean so much—fell with the increasing darkness. The wooden *chalets* with their boards shrunk and decayed by time and storm, began to look darker and darker, the church, still white, stood out against a sky



which looked as if it were taken out of a painting, and the summit of the Soutze, the round, wooded mountain which rises behind the village, had become quite black, while in the distance the lighted window of a *chalet* shone like an eye. The shadow and silence seemed to inspire some mysterious religious feeling; it was so far from the haunts of men with the sins of great cities, so near to the eternal solitudes which the snow guards inviolate!

This feeling of the greatness of nature is contagious, and by the time the *Angelus* sounded its slow sonorous tones, it had gained not only the mountaineers whose life is a part of that of the country, and who unconsciously share its silent austerity, but also the guests of the "Chamois," those citizens vivacious and noisy as their own streets, who brought their ceaseless activity even into the calm of the mountains which they delighted to disturb. Now they neither laughed, spoke, nor sang, but breathed deeply the pure air of the early evening, as silent as the mountains themselves, touched, perhaps, by flights of grave thoughts, at times almost breathless with an oppressive but delightful emotion. Suddenly the sounds of a violin were heard. It was played by a tourist whom nobody knew as yet, and who had begun to play uninvited. He played seemingly at random, as his fancy led, Schumann's *Réverie*, an adagio of Beethoven's and themes which he improvised; his inspiration took more and more of a religious tone, in harmony with the silent prayer of the peaceful village, with nature in its serenity, with the soft breeze of evening, and with all those hearts purified for a moment by aspirations which rose through the limpid heavens into the Infinite. This was not the artificial music of the drawing-room or of the concert-hall, drilled by professional talent, it was a different kind of music, not formed of sound alone, but of a thousand confused sensations which words cannot express, of a mysterious harmony which sages and poets have sometimes understood, and among all those who listened to it none could resist its magic spell.

When the music ceased silence still prevailed for a while, and broke gradually. The solemn hour in which the light died out was past, and it was now night, deep, fresh, starry, and calm, one of those nights



created to banish the vain sounds and strife of day. Conversation began again in the different groups. Some spoke of the weather which now seemed settled, others of the cooking which showed no prospect of improvement; others of proposed excursions, or of an Alpine accident which had happened the night before. The joker of the party, M. Lamousse, began to exercise his special talent in a fire of pleasantries. Madame Hirtz and Mademoiselle Lenoir, the two devotees, walked slowly to and fro, arm in arm, lost in the contemplation of beatitude, the stout red form of Madame Hirtz looming through the darkness, and Mademoiselle Lenoir looking for all the world as if she had been chopped out with a hatchet from the planks of some *chalet*; a young mountaineer recounted his recent ascent of one of the summits of the Dent du Midi, the Dent jaune, he explained, which he was only the third to climb, and which was one of those terrible mountains that unite all the dangers common to others, rocks which crumble away beneath one's feet, showers of stones, ladders placed at the edge of an abyss, glaciers hanging over precipices, which one can only traverse by cutting a foot-hold with one's pick. He spoke quite without bombast, as if he loved such dangers, felt full of the spirit necessary to brave them, and thought it natural to desire to brave them. A shudder ran through his hearers when he explained what was the "Vire aux dames," a narrow gully over a void, along which one can only pass by clinging to the rock with hands and knees, and to lose hold on which would be certain death.

"I cannot understand how people can expose themselves to such dangers," said Ellen, with a shiver.

"I can understand it!" said Maud, in her most incisive voice. "And I should like to go to the Dent jaune!—"

M. Gindre, to whom both had addressed their remarks, then began to develop for their benefit a very ingenious little theory of the philosophy of danger. "The difficulty," he said, "is not to expose oneself to any danger; but to decide to run the risk. If the danger is present, it is not appreciated, all one's powers are called upon to resist it—but afterwards, when it is recalled in imagination, one experiences a mixture of retrospective fear and of satisfaction, which leads to the

desire of again experiencing the same emotion, once more to face the danger just escaped; one seeks it again out of pure wantonness and craving for excitement; this is why soldiers love war. Besides, is it not true that, when all is said and done, the most important consideration of life is death?——”

Here Miss Webster interrupted the conversation, which was evidently not at all to her taste. The two girls were listening with interested and sustained attention. Ellen with a surprised look in her eyes, Maud with eyes which sparkled with enthusiasm. She made a gesture of vexation when she perceived Miss Webster's manoeuvre; but M. Gindre did not raise any objection to changing the conversation; he stopped short as a man does who is accustomed to think aloud, and to impose silence on himself as soon as he sees that his frankness is not agreeable to others. Besides, the clock had struck nine, and the guests of the “Chamois” had begun to wish each other good-night, and to retire to their respective rooms.

## II

### M. GINDRE'S DIARY

All the rooms in the inn being engaged, M. Gindre had been located in a neighbouring *chalet*. Of all the guests he was the last to retire, and even after going indoors, he sat thinking for a while at his window. The moon had risen and he could see stretched out before him a beautiful meadow-land, planted with a few trees, the gentle slope of which terminated suddenly in the depths overhung by the Soutze, which stood out dark against the clear brilliancy of the sky. He was tired, having walked from the railway station, by a road the picturesqueness of which did not prevent its being very fatiguing to one unaccustomed to mountainous walks. Nevertheless when he was driven from the window by the damp freshness of the night air, he did not go to bed, but opening his portmanteau took from it a book bound in black leather, in which he made a rule of writing, if only a few lines, every night.

He had begun to keep a diary when he was fifteen years old and still



at school, in which he wrote on days when he was moved by inward revolt against an unjust punishment, the brutality of the big boys, or by *ennui*, that implacable enemy which sometimes attacked him during his times of recreation, as well as during lecture hours. He had continued it afterwards during years of hard work and little pleasure, when he gained his livelihood by giving lessons and coaching for examinations, and later still in the small provincial town where, for ten years, he had taught philosophy. Gradually this habit of writing had assumed a tyrannical force, and become as much a necessity as the cares of the toilet. It had in a way doubled his life, giving a meaning to the smallest events of his existence, and sharpening his knowledge of himself in such a way that he could foretell his every impulse, thought, and action. He owed it to this diary that he had become a terribly conscientious man, unable to act without having first thought out all the possible consequences of his action, and yet when the act was once accomplished he would torture himself with calculations as to what further might possibly result from it, so that he was incapable of impulsive or spirited action of any kind. He was unhappy without being aware of it, like a consumptive, who suffers without feeling pain. His diary was his vice and his disease, and he was perfectly well aware of this, loving and hating it at the same time, as a drunkard loves his liquor, and an opium smoker the fatal drug. A hundred times his diary had prevented his following an impulse which would have changed the course of his whole life, and, not having followed which, was a source of lasting regret to him. A hundred times, when exasperated with his tyrant, he had resolved to destroy it; but instead of doing so had added a new page; he explained to himself why he had not carried out his resolve, and read it over, turning the pages at random, feeling sure that at whatever place he might open it, he would come upon some fragment to re-read, which would cause him keen pleasure. It was a complete picture of his own life, not only in the facts related from day to day, but also in the feelings he had experienced, the opinions he had professed, and the changes through which his tastes had passed as years rolled on. His journal was another self, a more complete self, in which,



photographed on page after page, he found all the details of the changes and shades of his being; a self in which he saw before him all the contradictions and transformations of his life. There he saw himself alternately sceptic and believer, socialist and conservative, realist and idealist, tender and cruel, egotistic and humanitarian. The constant change of his nature he found here, after a fashion, realised and stereotyped into a positive and fixed quality. He saw himself, as it were, photographed full-length, full-face, and profile, the portraits being so different according to the pose adopted that they might have been those of several persons, yet desperately like himself. Looking over the diaries of former years, some already yellow with age, he found them filled with enthusiasm which had now become indifference, with sympathies long since dead, and exploded beliefs, like the glass cases of a collector, full of butterflies of the life of which naught remains but their form and colour. The recent volumes were filled with new enthusiasms, but less lively, new sympathies less fresh, and new beliefs less sure, which would also pass and become nothing but dead husks, prepared for scrutiny by the hand of the same collector.

This perpetual change, this succession of ruins, these fugitive appearances to which the colour of the ink on the paper alone gave any reality—all this was himself, his very soul!— And it was literature also of exquisite form, like a succession of delicate perfumed bouquets, without strivings for effect, or apparent effort, in which ideas harmonized as if of their own accord, the effects of which meandered and varied from page to page. Here and there an untruth; he had "posed" to deceive himself, written an insincere phrase, shut depths of hypocrisy into a single word, accomplished prodigies in order to explain away something which he did not wish to acknowledge, excused his actions by the aid of the most diplomatic reasoning. And he knew this all the time, and had even written in one of the five or six thousand pages which his journal already occupied, that he knew this collection would be deceptive to a stranger, that it was only true for himself alone, and that even that truth, like all knowledge and language, was purely relative.

M. Gindre opened his diary, and his eyes fell on a page written a few days before, on the occasion of the marriage of one of his colleagues. He had amused himself by tracing an ideal portrait of the girl who, some day or other, perhaps, he would wish to become his wife. He read it again, with a faint smile on his lips :

"She must be small in figure, fragile-looking, and graceful. I do not ask that she should be beautiful, for I should not care for a regular and statuesque beauty; but her features must have that harmony without which nothing—neither human face, nor work of art, nor landscape—can charm me. Her eyes must have that temperate radiance which speaks of an equal balance of mind and heart; her hands must be delicately shaped, for nothing is so repugnant to all ideas of elegance as coarse hands; her movements must have that supple and natural grace which reveals purity of thought and feeling. By movements far more than by words, a woman betrays the secret of her being; she never says exactly what she means, and even her blushes show rather a care for external things than true impressions; she knows that she must not give herself out to be either what she is or what she would like to be, and that in appearance she ought to resemble some vague model, or generic image, in which all distinctive individual traits are weakened or lost. But in her walk, her gestures, the movements of her arms, the undulations of her neck—she is herself alone; and these are the indications to which one should look for her character—

"She must be an orphan, since that is a guarantee of peace in the future. Being an orphan myself, without relations, I am afraid of relations, the trouble they cause, and the quarrels to which they give rise; and as, in marrying, I should seek to find the greatest possible peace of mind, I should be afraid to leave such a loophole for domestic disturbances.

"For the same reason, she must have some money, for although according to the old dictum, made for the consolation of the poor, money does not make happiness, yet it is an indispensable condition of happiness. But again, her fortune must not be too large, for wealth imposes on one too many cares, duties, and obligations. All that I want in the

way of money, is an independence, for if poverty is servitude, wealth is slavery—— To be precise, I would fix the limit at from three to six hundred thousand francs. That is a capital which prudently invested would not be great enough to give trouble, and which would still be sufficient to relieve one from material cares by assuring an income which would be ample to maintain a comfortable home. I need hardly say that this capital must be so invested that it can at any time be easily realised; no houses of which one cannot get rid, nor landed properties, nor anything that would have to occasion troublesome calculations, and wearisome business negotiations. 'Expectations' must not enter into our horizon, but they are a drawback to which one must sometimes resign oneself. If they should be too large, however, I should renounce them rather than sacrifice my peace of mind and expose my married life to all the villainies of which people are capable when they think you are looking forward to becoming their heir.

"For the same reason she must be of good family, for this is necessary to a good education; it is very rarely that one generation suffices to produce qualities which are developed by hereditary well-being and propriety, qualities the absence of which would be a cruel deprivation for such a man as I. Nevertheless, although of good position, and accustomed to mix in society, she must not be always craving for social pleasures, for I could not suffer marriage to interfere with my ordinary mode of life, and I should soon grow to hate a wife who was always dragging me out to balls and parties just for the sake of amusing herself.

"She must be well educated, or more correctly, capable of being educated, for before marriage a young girl does not really learn anything, and I should readily excuse her if she were ignorant of the hypothetical notions of geography, history, and literature which are taught in 'establishments for young ladies.' But in the little she shows of what she has learnt, she must make me feel that, in her favourite authors and general impressions, she has the delicate intelligence which renders superior women able to dispense with the heavy baggage of positive knowledge, without which a man is unable to make any progress, an intelligence to seize upon and assimilate passing facts and incidents, and which lends a subtle grace to all that













is reflected in its magic mirror. Such intelligence is necessary, because it makes a distinguished woman, while teaching can only make a vain ignoramus, or a blue-stocking.

"As to moral qualities, how can I define them? The girl who is apparently the most simple-minded, is in reality a sphinx who defies our deductions, disconcerts our psychological efforts, and may develop into quite another sort of woman. But perhaps there are some very clear qualities, which cannot deceive us. I would have her reserved, for reserve is a grace of heart as wit is a grace of mind; I would have her modest, because modesty alone serves to show up good qualities, as a dark background throws bright colours into relief. I would have her gentle, because I prize above all things gentleness, with its melancholy charm beneath which one can detect sadness, regret, and above all, resignation; I would have her kind to children and to the poor, because it seems to me that kindness is perhaps the true solution of all the problems of life; at any rate it is the quality which can be most quickly recognized and is most difficult to simulate.

"Is that all? Oh no! Details are wanting, and these the most important details, which make the personality and the character; but these cannot be imagined, they must be copied. There is no perfect ideal but that which is modelled on the reality, and to finish this portrait, I must wait till I have found the model.

"And if I never find her?— These are but empty words, that I have just written, and I shall never marry, for I shall never love—I had almost forgotten this last detail, the most difficult of all to realise, I think. I must love her—not with one of those violent passions, the flames of which devour one's being, but with a love which more nearly resembles friendship. How can I express it? Friendship tinged with love, tender affection with a vein of passion in it, an affection which shall be warm yet calm, calm like all deep waters, like the skies of all beautiful countries, like the souls of all nature's nobles."

M. Gindre read over these lines with an air of complacent indulgence. Then he wrote slowly for half an hour; but whether it was fatigue, or he was not in a mood for writing, or he had nothing to say, or

he tried to express thoughts which were too vague and so escaped him—for some cause or other, the two pages which he filled with his fine handwriting were the least interesting of his diary.

## III

## DURING THE VACATION

In these little inns up among the mountains, acquaintances are quickly made. There is, above all, one thing which tends to promote good-fellowship, and that is the horribly bad cooking, with its two kinds of sauce, one brown and the other white, but both flavoured with cinnamon, almost alike as far as flavour goes, and so pungent that any food that comes in contact with them tastes of the same flavour. Then there are the tarts, in which juiceless, shrivelled fruits lie on a very thick paste, which is only softened by having lain for two days in the larder; the poultry cooked until the flesh is as hard as the bones; the badly chopped spinach, which scrapes your palate like so much coarse grass, without mentioning the crotchets of the cook for which one can hardly find names—all these are inexhaustible themes for mutual condolence. It is impossible not to grumble, when, after a walk which has made one ravenous, they serve you up tendons of beef so hard that hours of boiling have not been able to soften them, then, while the men try hard with knives and forks to make an impression on the food, grumbling all the time, the women, drawn together by the bonds of a common calamity, tell each other of wonderful recipes for delicate little dishes to hear of which makes one's mouth water.

"And that prevents our talking against one another," wisely remarked Miss Webster.

Friendships are struck up between people brought together thus by chance, which sometimes survive the stage of mere holiday acquaintanceship; groups form according to compatibility of character, tastes, and positions. M. Gindre soon noticed this.

There was first what he called the "joyous band" which centred round M. Lamousse, who was always "getting up" something or other, and setting the house topsy-turvy by way of amusement; his wife, a



lively and pretty brunette, seconded him most ably, and in order to start songs and games, their six children, whose lungs and legs were of the strongest, were willingly drawn into the *mêlée*; two young couples named Mosnié and Sazon, and coming respectively from Lausanne and Geneva, an Italian family, and an old bachelor named Jacquen, who looked profoundly solemn, but was a jolly fellow at heart, also joined this party; and as occasional allies it had two mountaineers, when these were not engaged in dangerous ascents, for which they started with their guides, armed with ropes, picks, and other implements.

The second group was more tranquil and less enterprising; it consisted of the Websters and the Ebsons who were occasionally joined by the Heals, an old-fashioned English couple, of a species which is now only found in the mountains. The husband wearing checked trousers, a nankeen waistcoat, and sheltering his complexion beneath a green umbrella, the wife tall, angular and serious, with large bunches of artificial flowers in her bonnet, and her hands always covered with light-coloured thread gloves, several sizes too large for her.

Madame Hirtz, and Mademoiselle Lenoir, the two devotees, kept apart from the rest, sometimes just approaching Miss Webster or Madame Mosnié for the purpose of slipping a tract into their hands, or profiting by some silence at table to suddenly burst out with a religious exhortation. Besides these there were some of those nondescript persons, without any special characteristic, who are constantly met wherever one goes, immobile, monotonous, indifferent, and commonplace, medium specimens of the human race, who have nothing to say for themselves, and of whom one does not know what to think.

M. Gindre, who had come to find rest for his nerves, which had been overstrained by work, not feeling very well, and attacked by that deep melancholy which is one of the consequences of mental fatigue, was at first very shy, and most anxious to avoid the noisy gaiety of the "joyous band." He rose at five a.m., hurriedly swallowed a cup of coffee, and started for a walk. He took one of those paths which ascend gradually through meadows and pine-woods, with their strongly rooted graceful trees; paths which pass by stones worn by avalanches along the edge

of abysses, in which a cataract roars, which traverse narrow valleys surrounded by giant rocks, and lead to heights where the horizon suddenly widens out, and you can see the superposed summits of the mountains, violet in shadow, or red with the glow of the sun on the granite, or scintillating with the mica of the glaciers, the radiance of which is dazzling in the full sunlight. Mere existence in the midst of this nature, in the calm of this atmosphere perfumed by a thousand flowers and herbs, in the breath of the pines, in the silence into which the sounds of bells, the hum of insects, the moan of the wind among the trees, seem to melt and harmonize, appeared to exercise a beneficent and calming effect upon him. The religious calm of cloisters and churches, of the places where we dream and where we pray, seemed to fall upon his soul. A sudden impulse of unaccountable kindness towards men and things stirred in him, and he felt a love awaken in his heart which was just the love that he had desired, that gentle love which is friendship, that calm love which is affection. Gradually his shyness disappeared, he no longer felt the desire to be alone, and he approached his companions.

His preference led him to join the second group, that of the Ebsons and Websters.

Like all men who are accustomed to mental analysis, he was fond of the society of ladies, and especially of young ladies, and chance could not have been kinder to him than in the present instance, for Ellen Webster and Maud Ebson were both, in their different styles, adorable specimens of what Goethe has called *das ewig Weibliche*, the ideal woman. Ellen with her almost classic purity of profile, her large blue eyes, the natural dignity of her gestures, and the correct grace of her thoughts, attracted, just as a beautiful hot-house flower, with its delicate hue and faint perfume, attracts. One needed but to glance at her for a moment, to be able to draw her horoscope, and to predict one of those noble lives, which are filled with orthodox and serene feelings, are never troubled by the breath of evil passions, and are yet made up entirely of grace and love. Maud, with her small mobile features, the restless brilliancy of her dark eyes, the perpetual motion of her person,

and her abrupt manner of speaking, on the other hand remained enigmatic and mysterious. No one could divine her probable future, and as if to add to her inscrutability, although she was nearly a woman as regarded her charms, her curiosity, and her shrewdness, she was still a child in her capriciousness, and unutterable naivness. She might be all that is best in women or all that is worst, or perhaps both at the same time. She had in her the making of one of those women whose fatal charms are a constant source of calamity; but perhaps, becoming loyal and giving up her perversity, she might also become a model of passionate fidelity and devotion. She was one of those women whom no one can understand, and who are loved for that very reason. The same difference, although in a less striking degree, existed between Mrs. Ebson and Miss Webster; the former attracted attention by her worried expression, which seemed to betray a troubled existence, and by her whimsical manners; the latter was "correct," even to her smallest gesture, fastidious almost to a mania, unable to awaken that sympathetic and vaguely tender feeling commonly aroused by "old maids" whom loneliness has not soured.

M. Gindre soon became their inseparable companion, and they might always be met together in their walks abroad. They defied fatigue, as they went along chatting of a thousand things. Miss Webster marched on in front with a strong, large stride, which mathematically covered the distance. Miss Ebson hardly left her mother, not wishing her to overhear the somewhat daring conversation of the philosopher. For his part, he took an almost equal pleasure in the society of both the girls, but yet he felt a certain preference for Maud, which increased as time went on. She explained her tastes and ideas to him, and he lent himself to her caprices.

"You have a great deal of patience with the child," said Mrs. Ebson to him sometimes, who herself rarely answered the awkward questions her daughter was always putting. "Don't you find her very troublesome?"

He was a little disconcerted at this, but hastened to explain that he always took an interest in young girls, and meanwhile Ellen looked at him with her large eyes, which seemed almost to pierce his thoughts.



One day, something occurred which disturbed him very much. Maud, who was always excessive in all she did, would never pass a stream without drinking deep draughts from it; and M. Gindre, who was always considerate, fearing the effect of the ice-cold water, tried to prevent her doing this. This scene was renewed during every walk; she put a little coquetry into her part, he too much kindness into his. She would have made herself ill rather than do without his intervention; he would have prevented her quenching her thirst, rather than say nothing. One day while this performance was going on, they heard the end of a dialogue between Mrs. Ebson and a mountaineer who had pointed out the road to them.

"Then this young lady is your daughter?"

"Yes."

"And the gentleman is your husband?"

"No! why, you see he might almost be my son!"

"Who knows? Perhaps he will be——"

Maud looked down at the stream as it disappeared under the moss. M. Gindre turned his face away. She no longer thought of drinking, nor he of preventing her doing so——

#### IV

##### ONE PAGE OF THE DIARY

"I can no longer read clearly within myself, where strange things are coming to pass. What a curious caprice of fortune was that which placed me, from the very day of my arrival, between these two girls, as if to show that those very people who pretend to the greatest amount of foresight, are the blindest as regards their own affairs, and that the time which they pass in introspection is lost time.

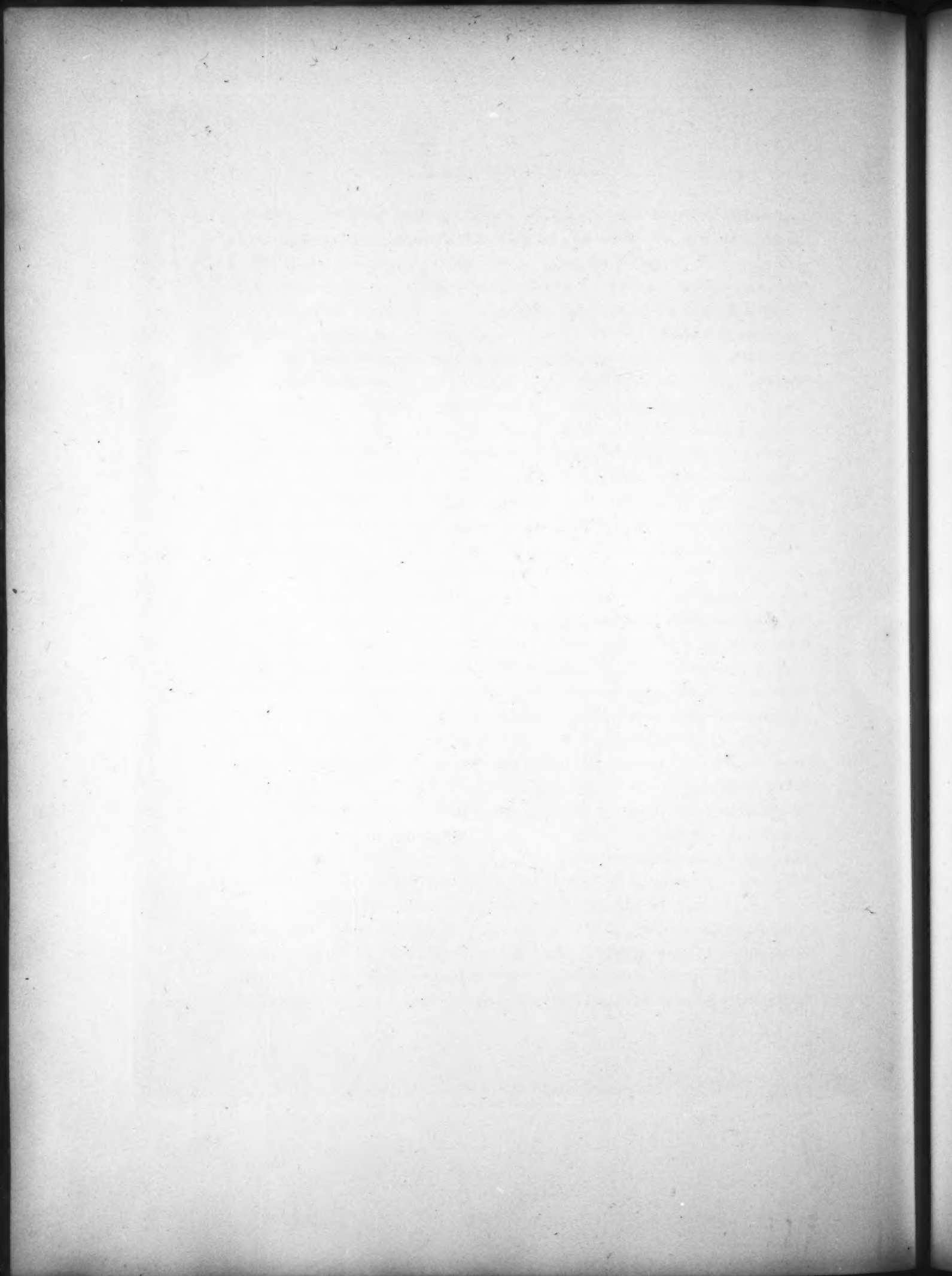
"One of them resembles in every detail, the portrait which I had sketched out of the ideal mistress of my heart. She is situated in precisely the required conditions; with no relations but an aunt, and that aunt a very proper one, who is not a bit troublesome, and is wise enough to know how to efface herself when she is not wanted; with a fortune which, as far as I have been able to ascertain, is quite sufficient,











and entirely at her own disposal. She has just the cast of beauty I admire, the delicate intelligence which I should desire, that gentleness and serenity of character which seem to me the most essential conditions of happiness. She has had an education calculated to develop her in the most healthy way. Travelling constantly, she has seen Italy, Germany, Norway, the Pyrenees, and brought back decided tastes which show a rare delicacy of perception, and a noble power of enthusiasm. Her eyes sparkle when she speaks of Florence, and one can see that she has felt at heart the ideal beauty of the great works of which that city still retains the imprint. She reads Dante. Of course she cannot thoroughly appreciate his work, and has not the bad taste to pretend to entirely understand it; but she feels its attraction, and that is a great deal, for only superior minds can understand the charm of such great works, and one will never be deceived if one judges the value of a woman by that of her favourite poet. Surely she will become one of these exquisite creatures whose mind and heart are in one divine harmony, like an echo, which, by repeating, purifies even the purest voices—like a mirror, reflected in which an image of beauty becomes still more beautiful—What charming books such girls are—all their words have a graceful turn, and a deep meaning! The conversation of men wearies me; I know beforehand all they are going to say, that of women is a thousand times richer and always gives me food for thought, but to talk with a young girl is a dialogue with the Unknown. The sphinx speaks with you, and does not say what it appears to say; behind its words floats an incomprehensible mystery.

"The other is almost the exact opposite of what I pictured in my dreams. She has a mother, who although a very agreeable woman, would none the less become a mother-in-law; she has a father who seldom comes to Europe, because he is too busy, but who may perhaps retire and come too often; she has two brothers and three sisters who will evidently constantly menace the peace of her home, and who will themselves marry some fine day, on which occasions her husband will perhaps be obliged to take her to the other side of the Atlantic to be present at their weddings, and in any case there are sure to be swarms of little nieces



and nephews. Her parents are a great deal too rich, as becomes Americans, but on the other hand, as Mrs. Ebson has often explained, their business is attended with great risks, so that a fortune may be lost one year and regained the next, passing through vicissitudes which do not trouble them, but which would drive me wild. She is not highly cultivated, and has gained but very little from her too hurried travels. As regards literature, she has never read anything but books which she ought not to have been allowed to read, and of which she speaks with more freedom than intelligence, and above all, with an apparently fixed and certainly troublesome determination to appear perverse. She is the reverse of gentle. Her movements are brusque, her gestures rough, and she affects an aggressive tone. All her person breathes a spirit of wildness and insubordination which wounds. Men look at her with that astonishment, not unmixed with inquietude, with which eccentric beings always inspire them, with that half unconscious antipathy, which is sometimes well justified, felt by orthodox natures with regard to those who run counter to our conventional notions of what ought to be— And in spite of all this, perhaps even *because* of it, she has a peculiar attraction for me. At the same time she disconcerts and charms me by her naïve curiosity about everything, her unconsidered frankness of speech, by the varied and strong impressions through which she passes, without attempting to dissimulate them, by the quick perception which she sometimes shows of her own inner life, by what one can see at a rapid glance into her soul, which for a moment opens before one only to close again immediately. She constantly eludes me, while I pursue her and remember what was once said to me, at a time when I did not yet know myself :

“ ‘You will never love any but a woman so mobile that you will not be able to understand her.’

“ Is this love?— What, love for such a child! Nonsense; it is a fancy, a sentiment, that foreign charm which is always in operation; perhaps what I like in her is that great far-away land of freedom, which I have always longed to see, because it is at least different from our dreadful Europe!— Yes, it is the fruit of idleness and sunlit walks

in the sweet air; it will pass away with the first rainy day, when I am alone for a few hours."

But it did not pass away. In vain M. Gindre struggled to regain his freedom. He tried to resume his solitary walks, but a vague weariness possessed him, and his thoughts remained fixed on the same subject; beautiful landscapes could not distract them. And when he returned in the evening late for supper, he at once sought the eyes of Maud, and rejoiced when his glance met hers. Then she would pout a little, pretend to be offended, and ask with her despotic air: "Where have you been all day?"

And he would answer like a school-boy taken to task: "I wanted to go for a walk, and as the weather looked doubtful this morning, I thought you would not care to go."

Upon which she would reply brusquely: "Oh, that is only an excuse; you had far better tell the truth—that you are tired of us—"

That would make him blush scarlet, and stammer while he uttered his protestations, and the eyes of the mischievous girl would sparkle with triumph in an access of satisfied cruelty, mitigated perhaps by just a touch of tenderness. Ellen and Miss Webster looked on, rather scandalized, and at last Mrs. Ebson would interfere:

"Maud, you are really dreadful! If M. Gindre wishes to go out alone, that is his own affair, and you have no right to try to mix yourself up in it."

But Maud always managed to have the last word:

"Oh! If you take his part, mamma, it is because he is in the wrong."

Mrs. Ebson, and indeed every one else, was so accustomed to Maud's sallies, that her impertinence was overlooked as a natural thing.

The other guests quietly observed these manœuvres. Madame Hirtz turned towards Mademoiselle Lenoir, and said to her in a stage whisper: "That is what the girls are coming to nowadays!"

M. Lamousse murmured: "The philosopher has met his match!"

And Madame Mosnié uttered a polite little laugh, which was just a trifle sarcastic.

M. Gindre, understanding, or hearing all that passed, felt that he was making himself ridiculous, and determined to leave the very next day. But no, he was held in bondage, and he felt a fever in his veins, like that of a lad of eighteen, perhaps not quite so intense, and rather mitigated by reason and memory, but still strong enough to concentrate his whole mind on one object, and to rob him of freedom of will. Nevertheless he would not give in yet, and kept repeating : "It's the climate," and "it will pass off"—but the days passed on, those sweet days that we wantonly spoil, to bitterly regret in after times.

## V

## SALANFE

Salanfe was a name which constantly recurred in conversation at the table. They would speak of its pasturage situated at the foot of the Dent du Midi and of the Tour Sallières, as of sacred ground, whereon still lingered the fugitive poetry of primitive countries. The mountaineers slept in the *chalets* before undertaking certain difficult excursions. Madame Hirtz, who had one day endeavoured to accompany the "joyous band" had only succeeded in getting half-way. It was Maud who persuaded M. Gindre to attempt the excursion; Mrs. Ebson resisted at first, but at last yielded, and the Misses Webster, although a little afraid, consented to join the party. The guide, Bochatay, was engaged to accompany them.

The first hour passed in an easy walk through woods, along a tolerably good road. Then they had to cross a dreadful piece of fallen ground, exposed to the full rays of the sun, without a single tree or any sort of shade, the stones of which seemed to give way beneath their feet. The long shadow of Miss Webster who walked very upright and firm, with her tall alpenstock in her hand, advanced in the dazzling light, with a sure step and a great exhibition of energy, a little behind the guide, who would ask her every now and then if she was tired. Turning her head from time to time, she saw behind her her niece, who was a little out of breath, very rosy, and quite charming to look upon, and Mrs. Ebson, who was puffing and blowing, and mopping her forehead.



M. Gindre and Maud brought up the rear. She, perfectly graceful and laughing in her strength and happy ignorance of vertigo, as much at home among the rolling stones, as on the floor of a ball-room, having naturally the foot-hold of a roe; he, a little uncomfortable, trying not to look at the abyss, out of breath, and a little heavy in spite of his thinness. Sometimes they joined in a halt by the water, and in spite of the disdainful expression of Bochaty who was not accustomed to such bad walkers, complained of the length of the distance across these stones, which seemed as if they would never end. The stones did end, however, and they reached a point where the path was hardly marked at all, among the tufts of myrtles, handfuls of which they plucked and ate, and which gave a funny violet hue to the rosy lips of Ellen Webster. Then they passed between fields of rhododendrons, the brilliant colours of which extended to the very edge of the precipice. Before them was the height which had still to be ascended, behind them an immense horizon, bare at first, but further on filled with the great grey mountains, towering one above the other into the far distance, where they seemed to float like vapoury clouds. Suddenly the ascent came to an end, and the summits of the Dent du Midi appeared rising majestically before them, their architectural outlines showing in rich sepia tints against the dazzling blue of the sky; a little further off they saw the Tour Sallières, larger, more massive, and very severe, divided in the centre by a long, dark, glistening glacier, which looked ready to sink down in avalanches; beyond that stretched the vast plain of Salanfe, intensely green, and so superbly calm that the sound of the bells belonging to its six hundred head of cattle seemed to melt into the silence. All stopped short in delighted surprise, uttering cries of admiration, and giving vent to some of those stupid exclamations which are so poor a means of expressing our varied emotions; then they walked on more slowly towards the *chalets*, the smoke of which they saw rising beneath them.

Very soon after they called a halt by a stream of water, and sat down most amicably with a shepherd whom they had invited to join their repast, and who, while slowly munching enormous pieces of meat, gave them an interesting account of the neighbouring district. M. Gindre,

who was in high spirits, cut up the sausages, carved the roast meat, and served everybody, jumping up every now and then to refill the water-bottle which circulated continually among the merry party. Ellen seemed to have thrown aside the seriousness which habitually gave her beautiful face an expression of extreme coldness. Maud had lost her discontented air, and her customary little wilful frown quite disappeared. Miss Webster alone seemed unhappy. Her sense of cleanliness was disturbed by the paper in which the meat had been wrapped; she was miserable at being powerless to combat the flies which surrounded them in airy crowds and settled on everything; as, on account of microbes, she would never drink any water but what had been boiled, she looked with longing and despair at the clear, cool draughts enjoyed by her companions, until at last, overcome by thirst, she was just on the point of mixing some of the spring water with her claret, when she saw hurrying towards them, and crossing the stream just above where they sat, a beautiful white pig, which, scenting a windfall, approached with friendly grunts.

Meanwhile a party of tourists which they had seen, some time before, descending the green slopes of the Col d'Emancy, arrived in sight of the *chalets*, and the guide, with the sharp eyes of a mountaineer, detected in them guests of the "Chamois." It was in fact, the "joyous band," the Lamousses with their three eldest children, terrible little climbers who were afraid of nothing, and whose loud shouts made the echoes resound. With them were half a score other persons, including M. Jacquen, in a very bad temper, compelled to endeavour to keep an agreeable countenance by the laughter which assailed him; little Madame Mosnié, who had started for the excursion in high-heeled shoes, arrived breathless, with crushed and bleeding feet, half carried by her husband; and even Madame Hirtz, whom they had brought, thinking to get a laugh out of her; but whom they found a dreadful bore, because after having during the first part of the journey done nothing but celebrate the Divine beauties of Nature in a tone of psalmody, she now did nothing but complain of the heat of the sun, the rapidity of the descent, and of her fatigue, repeating every minute, the comforting phrase: "It will kill me! I know it will!"

but forcibly dragged along by the two mountaineers, whose backs she was nearly breaking. As soon as they perceived M. Gindre and his party, they set up shouts of joyful recognition : "Why! is it you? Where have you come from? What luck to meet you!" as if they were old friends, who after ten years' separation, had met in the midst of a desert. Then while Madame Hirtz and Madame Mosnié sank down exhausted on the grass, the others sent for eatables from one of the *chalets*, and began to sing in chorus, and to get up games.

"What a nuisance!" said M. Gindre to Maud. "We were so happy without them—and now the every-day life is to begin again!"

But Maud did not pay much heed to his words; the uproar did not displease her in the least, she clapped her hands when M. Lamousse placed them all in a circle to dance the *picoulin*. They merrily danced round under the commands of M. Lamousse, who with the greatest energy instructed them by words and gestures as to how they were to proceed—"With one finger!— With two fingers!— With the whole hand! With the foot!" And M. Gindre, with a long face, raised first one finger, then two, then one hand, and tapped the ground with one foot, while they circled round to the refrain :

"And this is how we dance  
The charming *picoulin*—"

Then, as there seemed no end to the dance, he lost patience, made his escape, and took refuge by the Misses Webster, who had not taken part in the proceedings.

"To the devil," he cried, "with all those who do not respect the peace and sanctity of Nature!"

But Miss Webster did not approve of this sentiment. "They are young, and healthy, and need amusement," she said. And he thought he perceived a sparkle of raillery in Ellen's eyes.

Then he felt himself alone and neglected, and the sadness which was habitual to him fell upon him again with increased force, and suggested gloomy thoughts. It was in vain to mount so high to the foot of the summit of the Dent du Midi, under the shadow of the great, sombre Tour Sallières, the sight of which contracts one's heart with a shudder



at its vast immobility, to reach that great plain between the mountains, which seems a remnant of primeval beauty—even this could not save one from the tyranny of men. There, as elsewhere, wherever one might wander, men were found restless, mobile, importunate, affronting the magnificent silence with their vain noise, disturbing the mighty serenity of Nature with their absurd pleasures, running, climbing, gesticulating, ridiculous dwarfs on the shoulders of the giant mountains, shameful parasites of that Nature of which each thinks himself the centre, and the impassibility of which envelopes them in its lofty disdain :

“And this is how we dance.  
The charming *picoulin*——”

This refrain, which was constantly repeated, pursued M. Gindre, who while vaguely thinking as recorded, had climbed to a height above the *chalets*.

He recognized Maud's voice which distinctly dominated the others, and he saw them all, dark figures against the light, moving with the grotesque gestures of Chinese mandarins. They were his brothers and his fellow-creatures ; but he hated them. How could he ever have dreamed for a moment of entering into social life? Was not this hateful round, passing below him, a symbol of its constitution? Can people in society do anything but raise first one finger, then two, one hand, and one foot, at the word of command of some commonplace autocrat? Are not all our acts, viewed from above, as ridiculous as the movements of these people jumping about on the grass like so many puppets, the strings of which are pulled by unseen hands! Why dream-life and waking action, politics and love, all that we do, and feel, and think, is but a foolish round, which for a moment disturbs the silence of the universe, and causes a few shadows to pass and repass in the light——

“And this is how we dance  
The charming *picoulin*——”

Suddenly the *picoulin* changed to a polonaise, danced to the music of a war song. Then there was a shout. They had seen him from below and were making signs to him. M. Lamousse called out something or other, whereupon the whole band began to move towards him with one

accord. He would have liked to run away, but thought it best not to yield to temptation, and so waited with a forced smile on his lips. Then they surrounded him, singing his name to the tune of *Lampions*. He grew perfectly furious, and only controlled himself in the fear of being ridiculous, so he had to resign himself to join the procession which then moved towards the Misses Webster, singing *Marie trempe ton pain!*

Fortunately time was passing, and it began to be necessary to think of the homeward journey. M. Gindre waited impatiently for the moment when he should regain his liberty. But again he was disappointed; for the whole party was obliged to start in procession two by two, under the orders of M. Lamousse, who constituted himself commander-in-chief, and brandished his cane like a sword. The singing went on all the time, very much out of tune, and out of harmony with the splendour of surrounding nature, until the descent became so difficult as to need all their attention. Then M. Gindre found his opportunity to drop behind, and he was soon joined by Ellen Webster, whose manner was most gentle and sympathetic. With that delicate feminine intuition which excels in divining small troubles of the heart, she understood that the heart of this man had all the weakness and sensibility of a woman's heart, which a trifle can pain; she saw that something had deeply vexed him, and with all the precautions of a Sister of Mercy, she came to pour the balm of her sympathy on the imperceptible wound. At first there was only an interchange of insignificant phrases, but at the end of a few minutes, they were chatting frankly together like old friends.

"Of course, I know it is absurd," M. Gindre explained, feeling at the same time ashamed of having shown his weakness, and pleased at its being understood. "There is certainly no reason for me to be put out, and I know that a sensible man ought to be able to dance the *picoulin* if asked to do so— People come to the mountains to amuse themselves, do they not? Those who amuse themselves are right, and those who do not feel amused are wrong— But what would you have? I am very sensitive to the loveliness of nature, and what I love in it the most is its calm and silence; when this is disturbed, it seems as if

I were robbed of a friend—— and besides, we were so happy among ourselves, were we not?"

Ellen listened gravely.

"That is quite true," she said in her slow way, rendered still slower by her foreign accent. "I am just like you, and I was very vexed when I saw them all arrive; but they are so merry and good-tempered, and seem so to enjoy life! I am not accustomed to such gaiety, because my aunt and I always live alone. Yet in spite of all, I take the infection and want to laugh and sing with them—— Don't you think this is natural?"

M. Gindre shook his head.

"At twenty, perhaps it is—— and there are people who, like that good fellow, Lamousse, remain twenty at heart all their lives. But there comes a time when the mind acquires a sort of balance which one does not like to have disturbed; so that it is not quite my fault if I find their noise insupportable——"

"My aunt always says," rejoined Ellen with some hesitation, "that if we really feel goodwill to our fellow-creatures, we end by deriving pleasure from everything which is pleasing to others, even if we are a little bored by it."

"That is true," he replied; "but to feel so one must abstract from one's personality all that is above the level of one's ordinary fellow-creatures; besides, goodwill is not always to be recommended; for my part I think good actions preferable."

At this point he was interrupted by a cry of despair, followed by several shouts and a confusion of voices. They hurried forward as quickly as the difficulties of the path would permit, and rejoined the party which had paused aghast. Maud had just slipped on a rock which cut across the path, and had rolled over the edge of the precipice. Her fall had, however, been broken five or six yards down, and she was now clinging to a pine-tree with her feet resting on a little projection afforded by the hard roots of some rhododendrons. As they came up, M. Gindre heard her firm energetic voice calling :

"I tell you I am not hurt in the least—— But you must make haste and get me out of this!"



To do so was not so easy, however, for as far down as the pine to which she was clinging the rock was perfectly smooth and unapproachable. It was impossible to reach her without ropes, and they had none.

"Ropes must be fetched from Salanfe!" some one said.

The guide started off at once running to fetch them, and the others remained grouped in the road. All were overcome with horror. Mrs. Ebson stood on the very edge of the precipice, almost mad with grief, and uttering unintelligible words. Maud, catching sight of her wild eyes, tried to reassure her :

"Don't be afraid, mother!" she cried. "I am very comfortable here, I assure you—— I have a lovely view, and I can see a great many things that you cannot see!"

Then they congratulated each other on her marvellous escape.

"That is what we call looking death in the face," said M. Lamousse. Mademoiselle Lenoir said in her harsh voice :

"This is one of the cases in which the goodness of God is clearly manifested."

But M. Jacquen murmured sceptically :

"It seems to me that it would have been still more clearly manifested if Miss Maud had not slipped at all!"

Then they praised the courage of the girl, which enabled her to keep perfectly calm on the very brink of the abyss. M. Lamousse even tried to keep up their spirits by beginning a series of jokes, when suddenly he was interrupted by the voice of Maud, which sounded changed and full of horror :

"I am getting tired—— I know I shall have to go—— My foot is slipping!"

And her face contracted with a supreme effort of will.

There was a moment of stupor. Suddenly Mrs. Ebson sprang up and began to cry out :

"Maud!—Maud!—Maud!" as if this could save her daughter. Maud looked up and murmured gently in a tone of infinite tenderness :

"Good-bye, mother!"

Her tone was so calm, so noble, and so resigned, that two or three

of those present burst into tears. Mademoiselle Lenoir threw herself on her knees saying :

"Let us pray!"

Then M. Gindre had a sudden inspiration.

"Let us try to make use of the shawls!" he cried.

In a moment, the shawls and wraps which the ladies had brought with them to provide against the coolness of the evening were twisted and knotted together, forming a long rope in which a running knot was made, and which they threw to Maud, saying : "Try to fasten it round your waist!"

"I cannot leave go, I should fall!"

"Hold on with one hand at a time."

There was a moment of indescribable agony. The girl hesitated, not daring to loosen her hold on the branch which her hands clasped convulsively. She could hardly hold on any longer, but yet she felt that she must do so, or roll down into the abyss. For one moment she closed her eyes, then suddenly making up her mind to it, she executed the manœuvre indicated to her with wonderful adroitness and presence of mind. Without doubt she was saved. They dared not drag her up by the improvised rope, for fear the knots should give way; but it sufficed to steady her in her dangerous position until the guide arrived with the necessary ropes.

Once rescued from the terrible danger, Maud instantly recovered her normal state, but not so her mother, who for a long while seemed perfectly stupefied, laughing and crying at the same time, and whose limbs trembled so much that she swayed to and fro. Maud, with an impulsive movement, charming alike for its grace and feeling, threw her arms about her, exclaiming :

"Then you do love me very much, my poor dear mother; or you would not be so frightened!"

This phrase, and the tone in which it was said, went straight to the heart of M. Gindre, throwing a sudden light into his mind, into which up to that moment he had been unable to see clearly. It showed him the beauty of the nature hidden beneath a frivolous, eccentric, and *bizarre*













exterior. Then Maud turned to him, holding out her hand, and thanking him gently :

"And you were frightened also! How good you are!" she said. A little later she spoke to him again :

"Do you remember what you said to me about danger on the night you came here?" she asked. "Well, you were right, I am already beginning to regret that my adventure is over and done with." They had passed through the valley of Van, and the shades of evening were gathering on the pine-woods, as the party rapidly descended the path which had now again become easy. All were silent, impressed by that vision of an imminent and possible death among the rocks which break the frail human body, or the cascades which roll over and over, and toss it on to the plain, amid waves of foam, where the sun forms rainbows of varied light. M. Gindre, walking by himself, was thinking of the end of all our hopes and aspirations, so dear yet so short-lived—Of what avail are the beauties of nature, and the vain strivings of mankind? The strivings are stilled, the beauties of nature remain for a time, but also pass away, all things are but a succession of passing shadows, to which our minds alone give a semblance of reality. If there is anything eternal, it is the moment in which one has loved. That passes away also, it is true, like all things else, and even more quickly; but its light has sufficed to transfigure the soul.

M. Gindre felt happy as these thoughts passed confusedly through his mind, but for the first time in his life he failed to picture his mental state in his diary; such white pages are kind friends to whom one longs to confide one's sorrows, but whom one does not ask to participate in one's joys.

## VI

### THE END OF THE SEASON

The weather remained fine and bright. August passed in an alternation of oppressively hot days, and of cool evenings spent on the seats in front of the inn, watching the washerwomen at the fountain, and the silent groups of mountaineers, as the twilight waned into darkness.

Caravans passed continually on their way to Chamounix, and there were halts, and bustling about, and new faces hurrying to and fro, which for a quarter of an hour waked the little village square into full animation. Later on the number of caravans decreased, and the occupants of the "Chamois" also became fewer. The Lamousses went away, taking the spirit of merriment with them, and leaving behind them a void—a want of their constant movement, lively invention, laughter, and the gay voices of their children. Others followed, and half the places at table were vacant. It was already autumn, and richer, finer shades overspread the landscapes, while light mists veiled the sun as with gauze, and a peaceful melancholy seemed to settle on the woods, whose beauty was so soon to wither.

M. Gindre seemed to think that this end of the season would last for ever. He was always with the Ebsons and the Websters, and made it a custom of their daily promenades always to walk behind with Maud. Mrs. Ebson watched them unobserved; but she left her daughter full liberty of action, and their relationship became more and more intimate; they loved each other without admitting it, and ran a chance of parting for ever without having made the tender confession.

Three rainy days and a sudden spell of cold drove the remainder of the guests away from the "Chamois." The gutters ran with torrents of black water, which overflowed the square and made a perfect lake of it. The mountains were enveloped in banks of thick pale snow-clouds, which shut out the horizon as though with a curtain, and fluttered like torn ribbons across the clear spaces which sometimes suddenly appeared in the overcast sky. They were obliged to stay shivering in the *salon* spelling over old newspapers, or turning the pages of a few "railway novels" which had been forgotten by departed tourists; the tracts distributed by Madame Hirtz and Mademoiselle Lenoir were actually called into requisition; and the clouds looked so heavy that it seemed as if a deluge were about to fall, and it was hopeless to think of leaving their present quarters, for it was impossible to set off in such weather in the little, low, uncovered carriages which are the only ones known in that part of the country, and still more impossible to start on foot along roads changed for the nonce to rivers, down which the rain fell in cascades

to the plain below. The Heals alone had the courage to leave; the husband mounted on a mule, the wife sheltering herself under a big umbrella, and seated on a cane chair which was fastened on the top of their luggage on a small flat cart. But afterwards, on the first fine day, when the mountains reappeared white with snow in the sunlight, there was a general stampede. The Websters hurried off after very brief adieux, no one listened to M. Rubin, who declared that they were now sure to have a long spell of fine weather, and only the Ebsons were left, because Maud wished to see "the beginning of winter," and M. Gindre, who stayed because Maud remained. The village was deserted, the *bizarre* costumes of Alpine tourists no longer hurried to and fro in the square, which was quite given up to the mountaineers, who stood silently smoking their pipes in front of the shoemaker's house, while the women washed their linen at the fountain.

"Nevertheless, I should like to know how these people live and love, and marry and die," said Maud.

Who could say? During the day they might be seen passing, bent double under enormous loads of wheat, or fodder, which they carried on their heads; in the evening they stood in a group in one corner of the square. With the exception of Sunday, when certain sounds came from within the public house, their voices were never heard.

They remained mysterious, unknown and unknowable, like the mountain itself. Thus autumn wore on, and paler sunbeams traversed the misty heavens, and struck upon the snow which now drew lower down; the horizon grew narrow, and banks of mist rose from the shadowy valleys. And this peace of the landscape preparing for its long sleep beneath the snows of winter, this tranquillity of their human neighbours, who already slumbered in the monotony of their daily labour, this silence of the little village which was troubled only at morn by the sound of the *Angelus*, and at eve by the horn of the goatherd calling his flock together, breathed into the souls of the last three guests of the "Chamois" a serenity which lulled them into forgetfulness of the morrow. Why should this end? Every day was alike, each morning the same as its predecessor, each evening like that which came before; they walked without fatigue



along the same roads, and the minutes fell like the grains of sand in an hour-glass; it was only below them, far away in the plain, that sudden changes leave one at the mercy of fate.

But one day the little postman with blue vest and gilt buttons brought a telegram, and Mrs. Ebson declared that they would be obliged to leave next day.

This was a blow, a moment of agony and poignant regret, all the horrors of "the end" present and inevitable, and in the afternoon, while Mrs. Ebson superintended the chambermaid who packed their boxes, Maud and M. Gindre went for their last walk together.

They chose their destination with a mutual instinct. On the day after a tiring expedition, or in doubtful weather, they had always followed the Chamounix road as far as the village of Fins-Hauts. They knew all its windings and surprises, but yet they always followed it with renewed pleasure. This last time, however, it seemed to them long and desolate. As on former occasions, they paused on the bridge of Triège, above the open abyss where the torrent boils, and slowly mounted the *lacets* which wind in and out among the pine-trees; they saw the sombre crown of the Tête-Noire rise above the valley, which seems to flee away between the walls of the mountains towards the giant plains in the distance and the white pinnacles of the far-off mountains. These well-loved sights seemed to pain them like the face of the dead, and their hearts were so full that few words passed their lips. They plucked a few pale autumn flowers, commonplace like their own sadness, and after a short rest at Fins-Hauts, they turned back, slowly descending the paths which they had slowly ascended so short a time before, tormented by the same thought which would not leave them. "To-morrow it will all be over. We shall be beneath other skies, in other countries, half the world will be between us, and the years will pass, but the days that have fled will never return——"

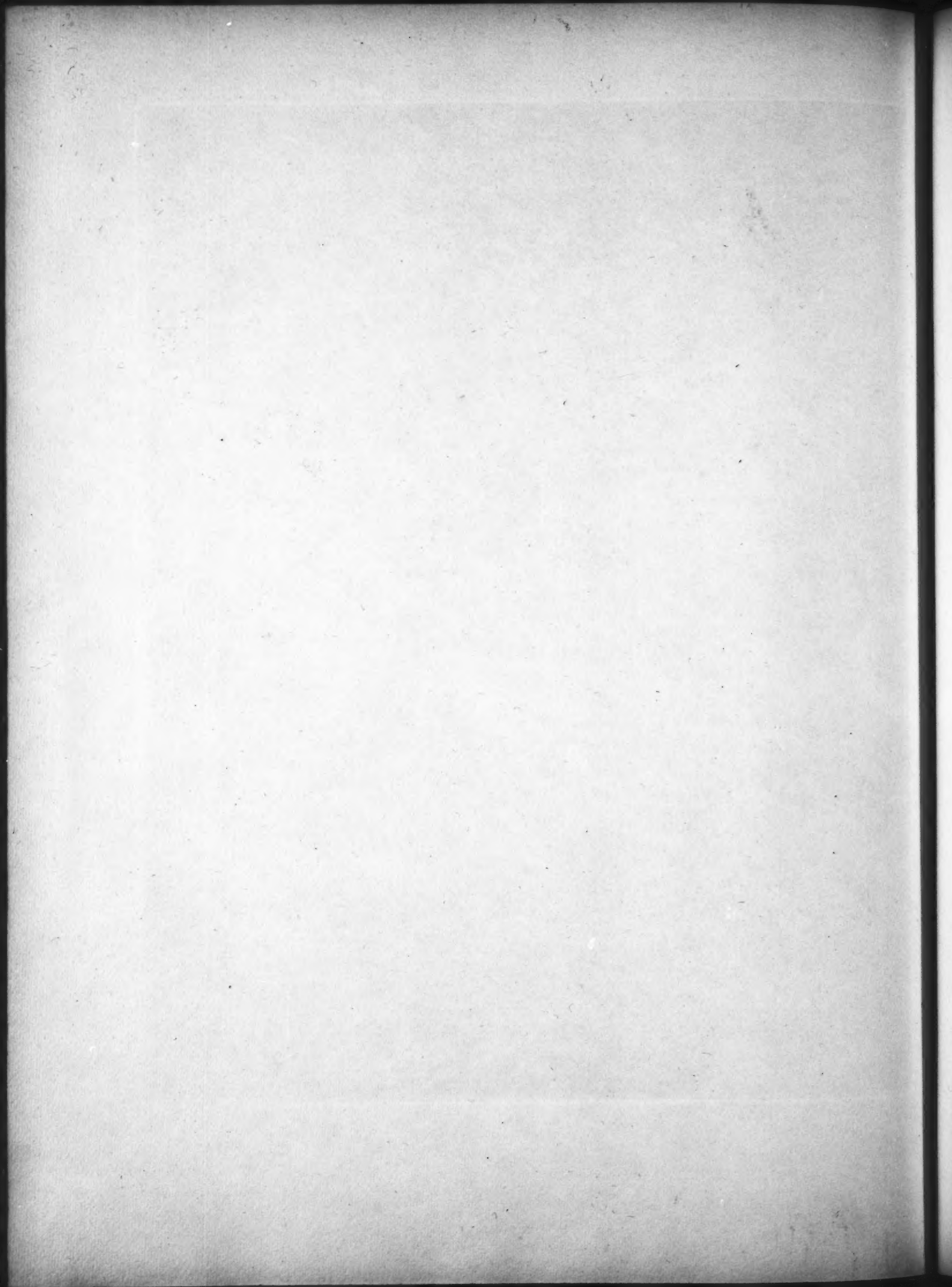
As before, they stopped again on the bridge of Triège. Their eyes were accustomed to the void, and leaning on the parapet they looked vaguely into the space which yawned beneath them, rendered a little giddy by the continuous roar of the waters over the stones. M. Gindre murmured: "Then it is all over, this is our last walk together!"











"Yes," repeated Maud, "our last walk together——"

She looked as she did on her "bad days," her pale face quite overcast, and with that wilful wrinkle between her brows; but, by a strange contrast, her voice was very gentle, so gentle that it sounded like a stifled sob; so that her sorrow seemed at the same time to be rebellious and resigned, and her attitude and words seemed to mingle an attempt to appear not to care with a real confession of infinite tenderness. Then M. Gindre remembered how, at the moment when she had escaped her peril on the way down from Salanfe, Maud had thrown herself into her mother's arms, and it seemed to him that she was now in a similar danger, from which he could save her, that a word from him would suffice to bring a radiance into her heart which darkness threatened to overcast, and to call from her lips once more those words which first opened up her soul to him, and which he seemed to hear again above the confused sounds of the torrent: "Then you do love me very much——"

Yes, yes, they were both hanging over the edge of a precipice; the few hours which still remained to them were the narrow edge of rock on which their separation depended; the parting which was imminent would precipitate both into the gulf of lives separated for ever, into the void where their hearts would be crushed as they fell.

Then he said softly: "But it is impossible—— we cannot part for ever!"

She raised her eyes to his, and waited; a suppressed ray of joy seeming to transfigure her; he no longer hesitated, but said: "Yes, it is impossible—— and you know it—— you know that I love you."

Then he paused, half afraid to go on; but Maud with a graceful child-like movement, held up her face for his first kiss. The crisis was past, the word which would change his whole life had been said, he could no longer weigh the pros and cons, nor think of the unknown father-in-law who would perhaps come to Europe, of the brothers and sisters and future nephews and nieces, of the threatening aspect of Maud's forehead when she frowned, nor the disquieting energy of her imperious voice. Yet all these things presented themselves confusedly to his mind, making him almost regret his sudden impulse, and spoiling the pleasure of that one supreme moment which brings the certainty of mutual love.



Some months later M. Gindre, seated with his young wife before the fire in his study, watched the last volumes of his diary disappear in the flames. From time to time he hastened their destruction with the tongs, as he sat with a rather forced smile on his lips, and a reflective melancholy over the sorrows of the past, in his eyes.

"Do you know," Maud said to him, "the way you had of watching your own thoughts and actions like that was very absurd!"

"Perhaps," he replied, "but I am not sure that I was not right to do so— However, let us say no more about it, for the last page has changed the meaning of all the others!"

There was only a great mass of grey cinders left now, which flew up in clouds as M. Gindre stirred them with the end of his tongs. "Those are the days of my sad youth," he said gently— "How they dance, they were never so gay before— See, they are gone, farewell to them!"

He rose, shook himself, kissed his wife, and murmured : "Well, there is still time enough for me to be happy !—"

ÉDOUARD ROD.













## THE UMBRELLA



One day during a heavy shower, I noticed M. Ernest Renan taking refuge from the rain in a doorway in the Boulevard Saint-Germain. As I was standing under the shelter of a bookstall, I was able to observe the master without indiscretion.

M. Renan was looking at a young lady, as she got into her carriage; and the great philosopher seemed to me sad. Then I remembered that he had at times expressed regret for his neglect of the masculine side of his nature, through his exclusive devotion to the cause of truth. But the next moment I despised myself for having such an imagination. What? Could the passing glance of a slight creature of scarcely average attractions, move that august philosopher to sadness? As a rule, it is true, an umbrella opened over a solitary head suggests isolation. But how charming, on the other hand, do the petty vexations of life become, if there are two to bear them! Conversation is never more delightful than under an umbrella, in a light shower.



An umbrella, used with skill, becomes a weapon of seduction. So at least I have read in very good novels. Some years ago, the most popular snake-charmer in town was a certain Deshaies. This man had never been outside Paris, but yet he charmed serpents as perfectly as the most highly skilled negro from Mozambique. When asked how he had acquired this talent, he used to answer simply : "By reading books." In the same way, it is through books that I have tried to learn the art of lady-killing. They instruct me, as an unfailing method, to offer a share of my umbrella on a rainy day to the lady of my choice.

M. Renan, however, has not asked books to teach him how to charm either serpents or damsels. He fascinates the whole human race. He has found in libraries a philosophy, a means of attaining happiness. What a perfect image of his philosophy M. Renan gives me now, as he meditates yonder under his umbrella! Shoulders slightly expanded, letting the rain drops fall, sheltering himself as completely as possible and losing himself in reverie; there we have wisdom itself!

No, the umbrella is not the symbol of isolation, it is the refuge of the thoughtful man, the sign of the most haughty aristocracy of sentiment. Moral solitude is the appointed lot of the most delicate and sensitive souls. By shrinking modestly as far as may be from the perpetual rain of vulgarity which covers the world, and by no other means, can the man of thought dream out his dream in peace.

Meanwhile the sun's rays had put to flight the last drops of rain. The master went on his way, and I ventured to follow, extolling him in my thoughts. He was walking now almost gaily, and his whole person expressed contentment, as he leaned his weight, with a complacent air, on his badly folded umbrella. "Oho!" thought I. "Why, there goes the very picture of self-satisfied respectability!" With M. Renan especially, it is dangerous to deduce a general law from a single fact. Minds so rich and versatile as his, present an infinite number of varying shades, some of them absolutely opposed to each other. That umbrella just now, misled me. M. Renan's view of life is not gloomy or contemptuous. If he has, at some epoch in his life been subject to such impressions, he has hastened to escape from them, as from a nightmare. Beyond









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doubt M. Renan desires to be spared the worries of material life, so that he may give himself unreservedly to the world of ideas and inward development. But this is neither timidity nor contempt for life; it is exactly the same quality which prompts a tradesman to devote himself entirely to looking after his business. Whatever it be that constitutes a man's stock-in-trade, be it material wealth or mental qualities, his first duty is to see to its support and development.

Umbrella of Renan, now I know thee! Thou art the umbrella of Sainte-Beuve! I have a portrait of that great critic which helps me greatly to understand his work. He has a velvet cap on his head, and is leaning on the familiar article which forms the subject of our discourse; his face has a most knowing expression, and his whole attitude bespeaks joviality. The umbrella forms an excellent corrective for the pride of intellect which these great masters carried to excess in their early years; it preserves a just balance, it saves them from being one-sided, and from renouncing all connection with that side of the French nature whose characteristics are wit, playful humour, and simple, unaffected enjoyment of the present. When I see these charming leaders of thought walk a trifle slouchingly, leaning on their umbrellas, a new light dawns on me, and I understand them and their success, and why the masses vie with the cultured in doing them honour. Sainte-Beuve and Renan are *bourgeois*, *bourgeois* who have feasted upon roses.

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The umbrella helps would-be lady-killers to secure their prey; it is the refuge of those resigned beings whose only aim is to shelter themselves as best they can when it rains; and lastly, it is the emblem of order, comfort, and easy-going simplicity; such are the three great classes into which those who wander through our streets may be divided.

Voiture (a poet who would be charming indeed if his works really came up to the high standard commonly ascribed to them) professed to be able to guess the profession of a passer-by merely by observing his gait. One day he accosted a man who was driving in a carriage along the Cours-la-Reine, with the words: "I have laid a wager, sir, that you are a tax-collector."



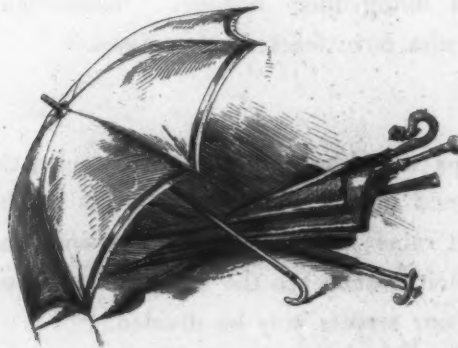
"Sir," replied the stranger, "lay a wager that you are a fool, and you will win."

There is a coarseness about this anecdote which offends me. Intuition is the noblest and most fruitful of the faculties of the human intellect. We ought not to discourage those who seek to cultivate it.

My pretension to gauge the inmost feelings of a man by his carrying or not carrying an umbrella could be justified by a ramble in the streets of Paris.

But to tell the truth, a principle which is sound to-day will to-morrow only lead to error. Modern industrial progress, and the substitution of vast establishments for small shops, affect the accuracy of my classification. Umbrellas are sold now at an absurdly cheap rate, and any hungry wretch clad in threadbare garments, will soon have his umbrella just as much as an ordinary respectable man, a philosopher, or a lady-killer. The umbrella is now no longer a piece of domestic furniture, an old and tried friend; it is only chosen in the caprice of a moment, from among a heap. Truly the progress of modern times fills the world with disorder.

MAURICE BARRÈS.





At Dieppe, in the days of the great war, or rather of the campaign against the Commune, the German invasion, that human tide which had spread over France until it met the ocean, had not yet retreated; and in Paris, as in some accursed island, an eruption was blazing to the sky, making every well-wisher to France cover his face in shame and agony! Under the very eyes of our conquerors, we looked up towards the east, to find the clouds reflect the tints of blood and fire, and to hear, in the silence granted us by the enemy,

the echo of cannon-shots exchanged between Frenchman and Frenchman.

Dull and heavy-hearted, the little Norman city seemed to hibernate about her deserted harbour. Her gaiety, her industry, her vivacious hospitality, had for the moment disappeared. The fair bathers and their cavaliers were for the time represented by a Parisian or two, who had

taken shelter within her gates during the *Année terrible*, or by a few English families, who hung, as it were, on the edge of France, ready to take flight at the first alarm to the opposite coast. There were other visitors, too, of a less welcome kind! From December onwards the heavy boots of the Prussian soldiers had reposed on these French hearths, the sabres of Prussian officers had clanked along the picturesque streets, and had brought home the history of that tragic winter to the people who lived in them.

And who is this in the Grande Rue? A man, clearly French, who carries his head proudly upon a pair of ample shoulders. He approaches, and, at last, as we make out the wavy moustache, the crisp hair drawn across the forehead, the unflinching glance of the quick blue eye, we recognize M. Alexandre Dumas *fil*s! We then remember that Dumas had a villa near Dieppe, at Puits, where his father, the great Dumas *père*, had drawn his last breath in the very month which saw the Prussians come over the horizon. *Vive Dumas fil*s! It does one good to look at him in such times as these. Even in our misery, he seems to carry about him a reserve of light-heartedness, a touch of sunshine to relieve the black. His vigour and confidence come as a proof that the race to which he belongs has some life in it yet, some life, too, that will not all go to the propagation of playwrights! This Frenchman alone is enough to give us hope for the future. At present he seems lost in thought. He ponders, perhaps, as he walks, a *Lettre sur les choses du jour*.

Suddenly he checks his steps, and peers in curiously at something in Clouet, the stationer's, window. I wonder what he is looking at? It is a pair of water-colour drawings. The first represents two oranges—one cut, the other intact—beside a little blue pot; the second, a bunch of mixed flowers in a glass. They are nothing much, but their handling is at once frank and correct, their tones delicate and transparent. The oranges : skin and flesh; the flowers : petals, leaves, and stalks, have the elasticity and the brilliant colour of life. In France it is never loss of time to turn aside to give a minute or two to art, to look at whatever may come in one's way, and to take one's chance. M. Dumas steps



into the shop, and enquires the price of the two little drawings. "They are not for sale," answers M. Clouet, or M. Clouet's *employé*; "they are left here by a lady, to be framed." And when M. Dumas examines the corner of the nearest drawing, he finds that in it lurks the signature : Madeleine Lemaire.

M. Dumas has no doubt whatever that he would like to possess these two little bits of still-life. Clouet goes off in search of the lady, and finds a young woman with one child, a girl-baby, who lives with her aunt in a small house near the cattle-market. He asks whether she would part with her drawings. "Most willingly," she answers, "but I doubt whether you will find any one willing to buy them!" The stationer names his client!

Next day, one of the drawings arrives at Puits, with a graceful note in a long, slender, lady's hand, begging M. Dumas to accept the humble creation as an homage to his genius, and mark of gratitude for his encouragement. The other drawing found a purchaser in an English lady.

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Madeleine Lemaire had taken refuge at Dieppe at the beginning of the war. The declaration of July 16th, and the rumour of French disasters which followed so quickly upon it, had surprised her at a German watering-place, at Kreuznath. In order to rejoin her family she had been obliged to pass through Belgium, and to perform part of the journey in a cattle-truck.

At last she found herself in safety at Dieppe, but as the storm grew daily more threatening, as the months passed and brought no relief, she was compelled to turn to some serious employment to kill the time, and to keep her mind from dwelling on our disasters. Some English friends procured a box of colours from London, and gave them to her. For the first time, she enjoyed the curious pleasure which attends the use of moist and plastic colour. She took her palette, and from the little tin tubes, she decorated its surface with the luscious pigments, and then arose the question : What to paint? To this she soon found an answer. In such a place, no subject could be better than what she found imme-

diately before her eyes. Any attempt to regularly embark on the painter's *métier* in Dieppe, and under the conditions of the moment, would have been unwise. So she sought for neither studio nor models. For the first, she made shift with the deep embrasure of her *salon* window; for the second she took the group of donkeys which used to stand at the opposite street corner. There the roads to Rouen and Arques bifurcated, and there, tied up to the wall of a little Norman house, the patient beasts stood all day, waiting their turns for work. Over their long, restless ears, hung their picturesque trappings, all but worn out with age, and the group was broken only when some baby, Mademoiselle Suzette herself, perhaps, was brought to take its daily ride. At the present moment Suzette is bothering her mother, and importing all sorts of accidental effects into a drawing of the nursery mounts outside. Happily a streak of unbidden colour is easily removed, and the composition will soon be ready for its title, taken from the sign-board opposite, which proclaims that here we may find *Bourriques à louer!*

One fine morning, it is no longer the pattering footfall of the donkeys, neither is it the peaceful and solemn lowing of the cattle in the adjacent market, that awakes the echoes; it is the hard, heavy rhythm of cavalry on the march; it is the Prussians!

From the right, from the left, from every point of the compass but that towards the sea, the Prussians are pouring in. Along all those paths and country lanes, which feed, as it were, the high road to Rouen, the dancing pennons and the steel tips of the Uhlans' lances follow each other in long-drawn-out lines. Gradually the lines converge into a single mass, which sweeps down the ridge upon the little sea-port. The rain beats upon their *schapkas* and their ample cloaks, and, at a rapid trot, each man with a revolver in his grip, the Prussian *ritters* pass on into Dieppe.

A few weeks later, the Government of National Defence, with more zeal, perhaps, than discretion, resolved to starve out the Prussians by blockading the port of Dieppe, through which the soldiers of King William had received nothing, not an egg, nor a potato, nor a loaf of bread! The enemy's supplies came from elsewhere, as every Norman knew.

Nevertheless, the blockade was ordered, and a little war vessel of some sort—a corvette, perhaps; a gun-boat, more likely—was despatched to lie off the port. Its arrival was signalled from the château, and a handful of Uhlans at once trotted down to the shore to see what they could make of it. The beach was covered with snow; the sea was splendidly blue, with a blue that seemed all the deeper by contrast with its fringe of white; and at a little distance from the lancers, a young woman stood with her child to enjoy the beauty of nature. Suddenly a puff of white smoke shot out from the side of the gun-boat; it was followed by the crack of an explosion, and the angry whistle of a bullet— The Uhlans dropped their glasses, wrenched their chargers about, and made off at a gallop for the town!

Long after they had disappeared, the young woman was still hurrying her child up the slope of snow. It was their lives that a French marksman had nearly taken. Next day, the gun-boat disappeared, and the town of Dieppe had to pay a heavy fine. That single rifle-shot cost France sixty thousand francs; and it nearly cost her Madame Madeleine Lemaire!

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After this interruption, Madame Lemaire painted no more marines. She was content with donkey cavalcades and flowers. Like other years, the *Année terrible* had its spring, and after its arrival, subjects in their freshness would be plentiful.

Meanwhile, she painted more oranges, and two drawings soon filled the empty places in the stationer's window. She painted, too, a bundle of radishes, whereby hangs a tale. In April or May, radishes are no more difficult to encounter than flowers. They are sitters as plentiful as they are willing, and they give an opportunity for colour of a very positive kind indeed. Well, our artist takes her little bundle of the ruddy roots, and with glowing carmine achieves its portrait. Novice as she is in water-colour, the bloom of the tints and the general force of the effect she wins compel her to lay down her brush and applaud her own success. The drawing is transported to Clouet's window, and her hopes



are sanguine. But a single day has not passed before its hues begin to fade. The glowing crimson pales, and twenty-four hours after their first exposure, the radishes are of the white variety! Twenty-four hours later still, they have disappeared altogether; the sun of April has eaten them! Yes, the sun is fond of carmine, but he will get no second opportunity to glut his appetite from Madeleine Lemaire. Amateurs may be easy. If ever again she paints a radish, they may be sure it will be innocent of carmine. Its blood will be of rose-madder, and the lesson taught by that first experiment may be considered a guarantee that the rest of her drawings are in "fast colours!"

In spite of the inexperience betrayed by this little adventure, Madame Lemaire soon won a wide popularity. That spring, at Dieppe, Clouet's customers saw a regular procession of her drawings pass through his window, and his shop was filled with buyers in almost fantastic variety. Parisian refugees, prompt to pounce upon and acquire whatever seemed at once pretty and new; English men and women, connoisseurs by birth-right of painting in water-colour; German officers, anxious to carry off some honest souvenir of their sojourn in France, some modest bouquet, in which a distant Dorothea might see a reminder of her Hermann's prowess!

In the summer which followed, the stationer organised an exhibition, on behalf of an association calling itself the *Société des Amis de l'Art*. Her admirers crowded round the work of Madame Lemaire. Donkeys and still-life, fruits, flowers, and odds and ends of bric-à-brac, all was good that came from her brush, and for everything there was a contest between eager buyers. When the adventure was closed, nothing remained on Madame Lemaire's hands: she saved nothing, rather, from all her treasures, beyond a single panel, a group of flowers, in return for which her master, M. Chaplin, was twelve years later to paint the portrait of her daughter.

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Her master! A panel! She has, then, had a master? She has painted in oil?

Madeleine Lemaire was born in a flower country, she was born on those slopes of Provence which furnish perfumes enough to intoxicate all Europe. It was in the month of flowers, too, it was in May—— But wait a bit, until I recall the name of the place. Not far from Fréjus, between Les Arcs and Draguignan, there is a château with a chapel beside it. In this chapel, and under the pierced lid of a *châsse*, or shrine, lies the effigy, or rather, as our eyes try to persuade us, the sleeping form, of Saint Rossoline, the patron saint of the district. Her costume is that of the fifteenth century, and this is her story.

Once on a time, that is about four hundred years ago, there lived at the château des Arcs a little girl of a pious turn of mind and very helpful to the poor, named Roseline de Villeneuve. Roseline!—Rossoline in the *patois* of the district—the very name suggests perfume and sweet feminine graces. The child's father, the *Seigneur châtelain* and Comte des Arcs, had a confidential steward, who, after the manner of his kind, gave him one day a malicious hint. "*La demoiselle* Rossoline," he declared, "stripped the château to find food for the poor, in her excess of charity." Soon afterwards, when, as usual, she betook herself to the postern where she distributed her alms, she was surprised by her father. She grasped her apron to her bosom, but it swelled out below her arms with the eatables with which she had filled it. The Comte ordered her to open it; it held nothing but a heap of roses!

Some people have so little religion in their souls that they doubt all promises! Unfortunate creatures! On the one hand, they are such poor pagans that they will not accept an omen! On the other, such weakly Christians that allegories cannot bring conviction! Their scepticism, is now, however, to have a rude shock. Surely it will give way, when we shall have published this "Miracle of the Roses" over the two worlds, a miracle which so clearly foretold that here between Fréjus and Draguignan, should be born the dearest friend the queen of flowers yet can boast!—— Saint Rossoline de Villeneuve, may your name be blessed!

When she grew up, Roseline entered the neighbouring Chartreuse, and she died its Abbess. After her death, her peasant friends, who had

profited by her virtues when alive, and had named her in their prayers, wished to see her once more face to face, and demanded her exhumation. For years the bishop was deaf to their importunities, but at last he gave his consent. The tomb was unsealed; the corpse of Roseline was exposed, and her faithful worshippers could see for themselves that it was still fresh and free from decay. Acclaimed a saint by the people, the Pope soon after confirmed the title. Her body was placed in a *châsse*, was exposed in her own convent church, and honoured with a stream of pilgrims. Soon miracles began to be worked; it is even declared they are worked still.

The story of Roseline, as I have told it, is history; now for a legend. It is said that Louis XIV paid a visit to the shrine of Saint Rossoline, and that, astonished by the limpid clearness of her eyes, he suspected a trick, and ordered a surgeon to test one of them with the prick of a sharp instrument. The result was to convince him that nothing but the natural, or rather the supernatural, organ was there. For ever afterwards he confessed the most particular respect for the Saint of Provence.

And now again for history; during the Revolution, the inhabitants of Les Arcs rose in defence of their relics, refusing to allow an impious hand to be laid upon their cherished corpse, and that, be it noted, without experimenting on the other eye!

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Transported from the church of the Chartreuse to a neighbouring chapel—the which chapel, with a fragmentary cloister, is all that remains of a monastery that once stood where the château stands now—the ever felicitous Saint Rossoline has become godmother to the whole district. As to how long the château itself has belonged to the Coll family, this we may presently learn from a legend of the Provençal *bourgeoisie*. However that may be, it was there, in the season of flowers, that M. Coll, collector at Draguignan, saw the first smile break over the features of his daughter Madeleine.

His father had refused honours and promotion under the First Empire, rather than quit his post as sub-prefect of Aix and mayor of Fréjus.



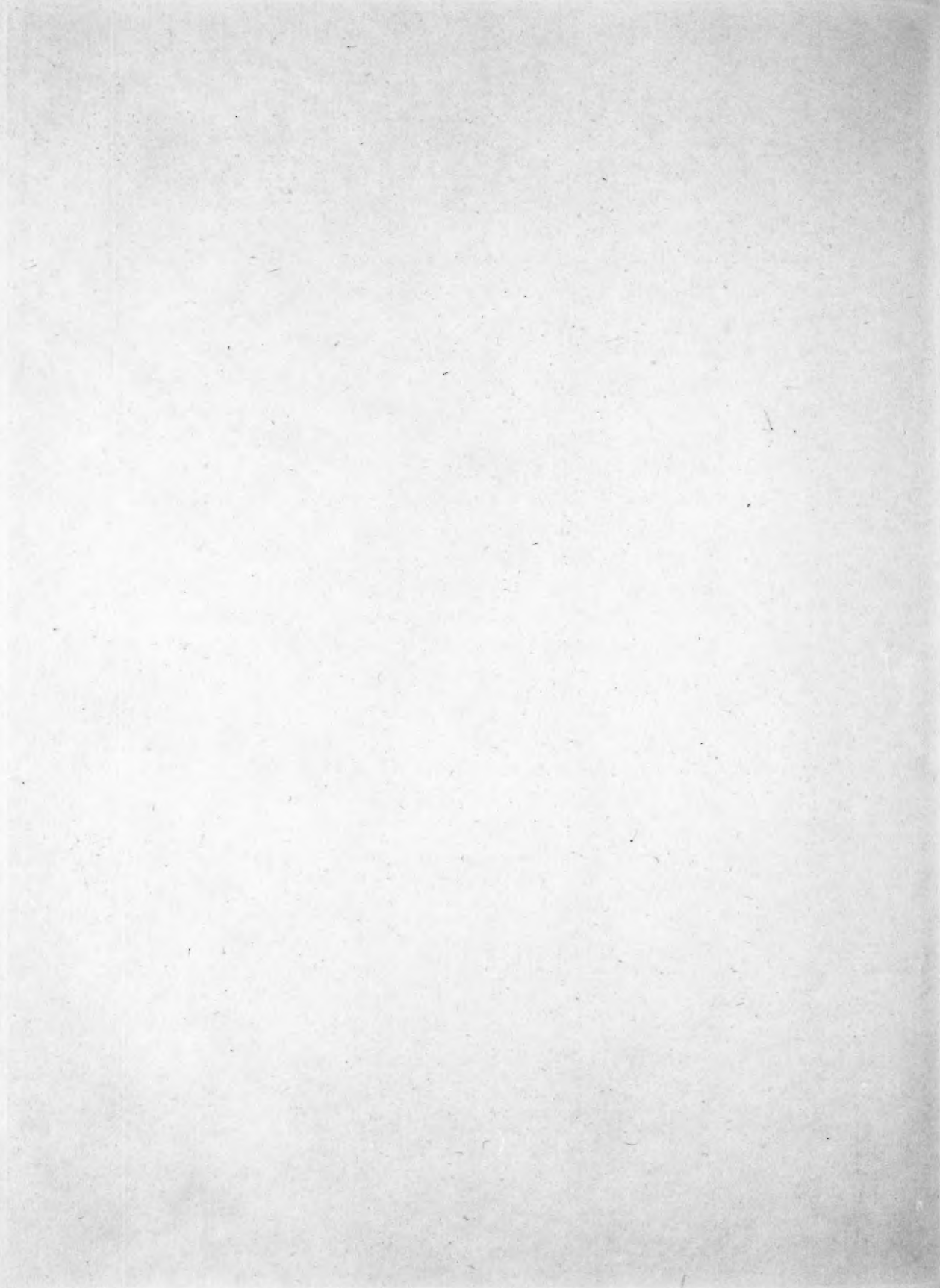






Chalot photo.





It is true that, in those days, a sub-prefect was not a nobody. It appears, moreover, that this particular sub-prefect was a somebody; for in 1814, we find that Napoleon on his way to his new kingdom of Elba, chose to embark at Fréjus in order that his last night in France, a night to be spent among a fiercely royalist population, should be passed under the roof of this faithful servant. Perhaps political affinity, handed down in the blood, has sometimes to do with love; at all events, the son of the Emperor's host married the daughter of an Imperial soldier, General Habert, and from that union sprang the girl who was afterwards to become a Queen of Flowers, and a peaceful glory of France.

Habert, one of the "volunteers of 1792," prisoner to the English in Ireland, aide-de-camp to Menou in Egypt, gloriously valorous at Jena, at Eylau, at Heilsberg; Habert, "the Ajax of the army of Catalonia" as he was called in the turgid language of the time (a language which took its tone from the cannonade that echoed from the four corners of Europe); Habert, the terror of Spain, the soldier who received his last wound in the last field of the great war, the stubborn Imperialist who carried off from Waterloo the fragment of a *tricolore*, to brandish it in the face of those messengers from Louis XVIII, who tempted him with offers of rank and authority; Habert, whose name stands in immortal letters on our Arc de Triomphe, and who died at last, after ten restful years, from the re-opening of an old wound!—it is strange, is it not, to find a man like this among the immediate ancestors of Madame Lemaire.

Ah! ours is a wonderful country! There, time does not hang heavy on one's hands. For the last century especially, life in France has bounded along, and every thirty years or so, death has been ready and abundant. Look at this for a moment. The observer busy with private matters, the historian of a quiet life, cannot pull upon the silken string which binds together the days of a lady and an artist without setting all sorts of bells jangling, without bringing out the deep notes of the tocsin which has called to arms, and has rung-in great national events. Before I can explain who she is and where she comes from, I have to open the histories of our Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars; before I can tell the story of her first attempts

in art, I must turn to the page on which a less glorious tumult finds its record.

General Habert took to wife the sister of the painter Belloc, a pupil of Gros and Géricault, who survived the one for forty years, the other for thirty. Belloc, after some notable successes as a painter of history (in 1810 he had won a *première médaille* with a "Death of Gaul," from Ossian) and as a portraitist (he had painted, among others, portraits of his brother-in-law, the redoubtable Habert, of Boissy d'Anglas, of the Duchesse de Berri, and of Michelet): Belloc had found time to become a master too. He died during the Second Empire, having been director of the excellent school of drawing in the Rue de l'École de Médecine ever since the Restoration. His most illustrious pupil, however, was formed in his own house, during the Monarchy of July. That was a daughter, indeed, of General Habert, but not the one who afterwards became Madame Coll; it was the lady who was at a later period to be known as Madame Herbelin.

The miniatures, at once masterly and exquisite, of Madame Herbelin, are famous. Trained at first in the oil method, and in the traditions of painting on a large scale, it was, as many of my readers will remember, in obedience to the advice of Eugène Delacroix that she turned her attention to miniatures. To the new art she brought the frankness and breadth of which she had already given proof in her more ambitious works. For the stippled carnations and violet tones brought into fashion by Madame de Mirbel, she substituted frank colouring and a sincere attempt to render the true nature of flesh. Her miniatures are at once delicate and free, subtle in handling, and full of vitality. If it were necessary that I should here point to one of her works, it would not be the portrait of M. Guizot, nor that of Rossini, that I should choose, neither would it be that of Isabey, nor even that of Robert-Fleury. Flattering as it was to the young woman to have all these great men pose before her, I should select no one of their effigies to represent her talent; I should choose her "Child with a Rose."

A little girl, still scarcely more than a baby, bends her head and drops her eyes towards a rose, which she holds in her left hand. A



knot of white muslin rests upon her small brown head; the ends falling over, form a cap, between which and the left ear, two delightful curls hang down upon the cheek. Already the arch of the brows is clearly marked. Under the long eyelids, with their oriental langour, descends the soft, protecting barrier of the lashes. The nose is finely cut; the lips are daintily curled; the mouth nestles softly in the cheeks; and the chin lies like a peach on the smooth, elastic besome with its frame of fleecy muslin. The costume is that of Greuze's "Village Bride."

But in all this do we not find something which recalls another, the child of whom we had a glimpse on the beach at Dieppe? Yes, the little sitter who holds a rose and its attendant bud in her tiny fingers is the future Empress of the Flowers, the future mother of Mademoiselle Suzette. Madame Herbelin, who lived in Paris with her mother, used to invite her niece Madeleine to leave Provence and stay with her a few weeks every winter. On one of these occasions there was a children's fancy ball, and Madeleine wore the dress we here find painted by her aunt. The picture is a souvenir of the event.

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The babyhood of Mademoiselle Madeleine is over—she is ten years old! For the education of such a little lady Saint Rossoline offers few facilities; and so at last we find her placed with her aunt Herbelin and her grandmother Habert, not for a few weeks, but for years. But in a Parisian *appartement* a great person like this is no slight disturbance. The two older ladies are fond of peace, and so they send their charge upstairs, to the floor above, where Madame Cavé will look after her. And here we again meet with a curious coincidence. For Madame Cavé was author of a *Méthode de dessin sans maître* (a system for drawing without a master). It was a dispensation of Providence that at ten years of age, Madeleine Coll should have been such a little Turk that means to keep her in order had to be devised. For two or three years she was kept hard at work under the eye of Madame Cavé, making tracings from engravings, then copying the same engravings and correcting her copies

by her tracings, and finally making a third *replica* from memory alone. Such was the famous method, in which "with the help of a mistress" seems to have stood for "without the help of a master." At this game the child appears to have acquired a certain dexterity and sense of exactness. At fourteen she was taken by her aunt to the studio of M. Chaplin. Thither she returned day after day for four years and a half, and every day she painted in oil directly from nature. "Observe and paint," this was the system of the master, who brought his pupil face to face with the model and bid her do her best. Madame Lemaire's practice is still governed by the same principle, which again is curiously illustrated by M. Chaplin's own work; this is nothing but the truth clothed in elegance and deprived of grossness.

Chaplin was then just beginning to be the fashion. He had lately exhibited his portrait of Mrs. Priestly; his "Premières Roses" had been hung in the Tuileries. Commissioned to paint the *Salon de l'Hémicycle* and the bath-room of the Empress, in the Élysée, he thought it worth his while to employ his new pupil on the work. But another disciple had lately left his studio in Madame Henriette Browne, who was already making as much noise in the world as her master. Her "Grand'Mère" and "Les Puritains" had appeared together in 1861, to be followed by "Consolation"—"A gem," said Paul de Saint-Victor, "of sentiment and finesse, a tear transformed into a pearl"—by the "Femme d'Eleusis," and by two Harem interiors. What a chance for rivalry was then afforded!

I may add, too, that Madame Herbelin was at the height of her reputation. Had not the jury wished, as early as 1853, to decorate her with the red rosette? But in those days it was given only to males and not even to all of them! Finally, it should not be forgotten that Belloc, that waif from an earlier age, who was uncle to Madame Herbelin and grand-uncle to Madeleine Coll, was still alive. Following the example of industry set them by their mother—she had lately translated Miss Edgeworth's *Moral Tales*, the *Memoirs of Lord Byron*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—his two daughters busied themselves with more industry and perseverance than most people of their condition; the one painted miniatures, the other miniatures and portraits in oil. Here, then, was



a corner of Paris, of middle class Paris, in which the law of toil was honourably observed, and the patron deity of the spot was Madame Habert, the widow of the Catalonian Ajax. Her aged features were a monument to the heroic beginnings of the century, and she found it well that the grand-daughter of a Napoleonic soldier should put aside a life of mere ease and idleness, and give proofs of her native energies by devotion to the arts of peace. So that we need feel no surprise that Madeleine Coll determined to follow in earnest the profession of art.

The first thing she exhibited to the public was a portrait of her grandmother, "Portrait de Madame la Baronne H.," said the Salon catalogue of 1864. The picture was painted after no more than two years' study in Chaplin's studio; it is now an ornament of Madame Herbelin's drawing-room. The head and bust of the old lady are relieved against a background of silent red. A kind of black mantilla, lined with white, hangs from the head, while the soft bands of silver-white hair finish in two equal curls on either cheek. The features are large, yet refined; the whole face at once strong and distinguished. The height of the brow; the confident calmness of the light brown eyes; the aquiline nose; the lips still clearly cut even when years have drawn down their corners; the supple cheeks; the soft, well-formed hands, crossed calmly in the lap; all these things point to some one who is no commonplace old woman, but a lady in whom there is neither weakness nor hardness of soul. In the smiling firmness and *bonhomie*, in the general look of intimacy, we find an echo of those grandmothers of a former generation who have come down to us in the pastels of Perronneau. Neither is it too much to say that in grace of design, felicity of touch, and lightness of impast, in the golden transparency of the flesh tints and the easy hang of the draperies, we get reminders of Van Dyck himself. A French grand-daughter of the delightful master, of the master who was born at Antwerp to the glory of the fair English and Genoese, it was in that character that Madeleine Coll announced herself to the world. Charmed with her picture, the jury were on the point of awarding it a medal, but they changed their minds when they learnt that its author was but sixteen years of age. "At your years, Mademoiselle, it is sufficient to have



deserved a prize. Go, my dear young lady, go back to your easel! The medal will come to you in good time—unless you rise too quickly beyond its reach!"

A year later Mademoiselle Coll exhibited an Algerian subject, a single figure which the catalogue called "Jamma Bent-Assem, jeune fille de Blidah." She was ambitious, perhaps, to provide a sequel to Madame Browne's two Harems, the "Visite" and the "Joueuse de Flûte." It might have been so. Between you and me and the post, Madeleine Coll has never gone farther on the road to Africa than Saint Rossoline! "Jamma Bent-Assem" must then have been a production of pure *chic*, with no model for its local colour but that afforded by the clever young woman's lively imagination!

And yet M. Chaplin's apprentice had been a most determined worker from nature, even in her etchings. Etchings? Yes, to the Salon of 1863 Madame Henriette Browne had sent a few examples of that then neglected art, and so her young rival must dabble in *aquafortis* too. By M. Chaplin's advice, she joined the class of M. Hédouin. But she had soon grown impatient of reproductive work, of transferring to copper the pictures of other men (among them the "Liseur" of Meissonier), and had turned to original work, to "painter-etching," as it is called. Look here, for instance, at this cow-woman, in her byre, her pitchfork ready for work. To do this plate Madeleine ensconced herself, with her apparatus, in the corner of the stable, so that figure and chiaroscuro could be observed from life. Well then, how about "Jamma Bent-Assem?" Here is the answer to the riddle. That young woman was a reality; Mademoiselle Coll found her at Worth's, pinning bodices. Her name, no doubt, had to be edited, had to be fitted to her type; an unlucky fate, too, had led to her birth at Batignolles; but no one who looks at her portrait can deny that fate meant her for a *yashmak*!

At the Salon of 1866 "Mademoiselle Coll" disappears to give place to "Madame Coll Lemaire," who, in turn, gives proof that neither the joys nor the cares of married life will rob the world of her art. She will live her life; she will learn the joys and sorrows of a wife and of a woman of the world, and yet, while she fulfils the duties of both, she will not forget that she was first of all an artist. Look at this little









Chloe phot.



page of domesticity, a "Child playing with a Dog." Who would believe that it was finished on the twentieth of March, and that, on the twenty-first, its creator gave the world another creation, in the little daughter, the Mademoiselle Suzette whom we saw, in 1870, trotting on the sands of Dieppe.

To the Salon of 1867 Madame Lemaire sent two pictures of *genre*, "As-tu déjeuné?" and "Une Crèche." The first, a woman in Flemish costume—a bodice of red velvet over a skirt of grey satin,—talking to a parrot; the second, two nuns with some twenty children in a garden. In all this we seem still to find an echo of Madame Browne. That lady had painted shortly before her "Charity School at Aix" and her "Sisters of Charity." But no, Madame Lemaire had seen this *crèche* at Dieppe, where already she had begun to pass her summers with her aunt. She owed the idea to that northern province in which children are so abundant; it was but fair then that the Government should have bought the picture and hung it in the museum at Rouen.

In 1868 our paintress took a rest. In 1869, as "Madame Lemaire, née Madeleine Coll," she sent two pictures to the Salon, an "Improvisatrice Vénitienne" and a "Diana with her dog." The first of these two young women was one of those red-haired Venetians who are now the mode. The second was a girl in a "Di Vernon" hat, with a magnificent black hound beside her. One picture went to America, to be sold for a great price in aid of sufferers by the Chicago conflagration; the other is in Sweden. It will be seen that the young Frenchwoman's reputation soon began to spread.

To the next Salon, that of 1870, she sent the "Portrait du Prince J. Poniatowski, Sénateur," and a panel of "Peaches and Flowers." These were the first flowers she painted. They were done in oil, partly with the help of the late Philippe Rousseau's laconic advice. In a few months there will be no more senators, but plenty of flowers and fruits. Moreover it was at this very Salon of 1870, that Madame Lemaire was captivated by the water-colours of the Italian, Simonetti, "Le Concert" and "La Rencontre." Fortuny's pupil had turned out some little people of the Louis Quinze days in his transparent medium, and they at once charmed an eye trained



in Chaplin's studio. Their freedom, their ease, their limpidity, fascinated the fellow artist—and that artist a lady—who had two works of her own in the Palais de l'Industrie, and yet could look at those of her neighbour without a touch of envy!

Such drawings as those of Simonetti were then new in France. It may have at once occurred to Madame Lemaire that they might be improved upon by a touch of the French virtues of simplicity, repose, and grace; she may have been even bold enough to think that a lesson might be given to these clever Italians, if not to the English themselves, in the use of water-colours! At the critical moment, however, she departed for Kreuznach, whence she was to return by such devious routes to France and Dieppe.

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In the Autumn of 1871 we find her re-established in Paris, and an aquarellist. In this capacity she sent to the Salon of 1872 a "Sortie de l'Eglise" in which a crowd of Spanish costumes were treated with much taste and dexterity. Her second contribution was a still-life, "Grapes and Peaches," in oil. In 1873 and 1874 she seems to hark back for the moment to her original *métier*, but we must be patient and wait for the end. It is well worth waiting for.

In the first place we have a *Merveilleuse*; a "Mademoiselle Angot," as the catalogue calls her. She is dressed in a robe of yellow satin, a flowered scarf and a huge hat nodding with red feathers. The robe is a wonder, a joy to the eyes, contrasting splendidly with the russet hair and black eyes of the wearer; the original is the property of the Spanish colourist, Madrazo. This same year we have another *Merveilleuse*, smaller than the last, sitting on a marblé seat, back to back, or rather side by side, with a *Merveilleux*, who whispers soft nothings in her ears as she pulls the petals from a *marguerite*. Her scarf has fallen from her bare shoulders, has fallen from her long slender arms, and now lies about her short waist *à la Grecque*. Next came the "Panier de Roses;" here a blonde, pink-robed Columbine stood up, tall and pale, grasping a mask which summed up all the harmony in a fine note of black.

After a short eclipse, in 1876, the following came in rapid succession from Madame Lemaire's easel. An interesting brunette in an Empire robe, a "Corinne" in fact; "Fruits and Flowers;" and then two water-colours, "Gilly-Flowers" and "Chrysanthemums and Pomegranates;" a "Manon," sister to the "Columbine" and the "Mademoiselle Angot," a brisk and changeful Manon, in a costume of green and blue velvet, sprinkled with bows of white and red; and then a portrait, "Mademoiselle W.," a pretty blonde in white satin and tulle, before a background of blue plush. The father of this young girl, an American—why should I not name Mr. Warren?—had three daughters, like the father of Cinderella. But not one of the three had the treatment of Cinderella. Far from it. Mr. Warren gave to each her choice of an artist to paint her picture. The eldest chose Chaplin, the second Madeleine Lemaire, the third Clairin. It must be allowed that the choice of the second was no worse than those of her sisters. Her portrait won honourable mention at the Salon, where it had for companions a pair of water-colours, another young girl's portrait, and an "Orange and Chrysanthemum."

Finally, in 1878, came "Roses," and "Roses and Peaches," in the water-colour room; an "Ophelia" and a portrait of M. J.-E. Saintin, among the oil pictures. The portrait of M. Saintin was as pleasant as himself; to the Ophelia fate has been unkind. Stretched along the river edge among her flowers, her figure was charming, and so it seemed to some dealer who had relations with America. It is pleasant enough to remember this, and to realize that a new nation of art-lovers is rising beyond the Atlantic. It is not, however, so pleasing to know that the dealer in question, thinking the canvas would travel better were it not quite so long, begged the artist to amputate the pretty feet which peeped out from beneath Ophelia's skirt! With an indifference that amounts to negligence—an indifference which contributes no doubt to that simplicity which is not the least fascinating part of her character—Madame Lemaire consented to the sacrifice. So much the worse for America. France has retained the feet. They may be seen any day at the home of our witty colleague, M. Adrien Marx. It is not the first time that "Figaro" has profited by other people's folly!



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After 1878 you will look in vain for the name of Madeleine Lemaire in the Salon catalogues. And the reason? The reason has its consolations. For the first months of 1879 saw the foundation, in Paris, of the *Société des Aquarellistes Français*. Since then the pupil of Chaplin has not altogether renounced oil painting, in which she won her first successes. That is proved by an unfinished picture which I have lately seen in her studio. It is the figure of a young woman asleep on blue satin cushions. Her hair is undone; a violet drapery embraces her limbs; from her relaxed hands a bunch of peonies is about to fall; her swelling bust, modelled to ravishment, has escaped from its prison. The picture dazzles with its truth. But this, as I say, is still unfinished, and Madeleine Lemaire is the queen of that French Society, which already, though but a baby, is the acknowledged rival of its patriarchal English model. Her works were at once the glory and the charm of that first exhibition which took place nine years ago.

And yet, in that first exhibition, there were soldiers by Detaille, there were fantasias by Louis Leloir, there were cats by Eugène Lambert. Landscapes by Français, dignified in conception and masterly in style, hung beside landscapes into which Heilbuth had put all the fascinating nature he could command. There were other landscapes, too, scenes from Provence in which the rejoicing glory of a southern sun was rendered in a wash of water. Who does not remember with emotion those scenes from the Riviera signed Jules Jacquemart? He, too, was one of the Society's glories. Before him, I should fancy, even Madame Madeleine Lemaire would do graceful obeisance. But before the *Société* had reached its third anniversary, his name had disappeared from the list, and his form from among men. The peculiar gift of Jacquemart, the ability to win vigour and finesse with lightly tinted washes, to get brilliance and repose without retouches and without the help of body-colour; this gift, for it is a gift, with a fascinating power of its own, has descended on no one with greater fulness than on Madame Madeleine Lemaire.

To the *Société's* first exhibition Madame Lemaire sent a "Columbine" in



pink satin; a young girl in a loose red velvet robe, sitting before a table and fingering a terrestrial globe; and, above all, a "Panier de Pensées." These were thrown together, as if by accident, and yet each flower had its individuality, its own form and tint. The colour harmony was made up of dark and glowing violets relieved against light yellow; the textures of the softest and finest velvet. Beside the pansies an armful of field-flowers, illuminated here and there by a blazing poppy, and a few mallows.

Ever since that notable year Madame Lemaire has only twice failed to renew her triumph. In 1884 and 1886 she abstained from exhibition, her motive being, on her own confession, a reluctance to fatigue her public. It seemed as if, in those two years, the very spring had failed! Reinforced as the Society has been with every season that has passed since its foundation, it still owes its vogue mainly to the work of this unaffected genius. How many *Parisiennes*, in dainty modern toilets, has she not fixed in some familiar attitude and offered to our eyes? Now it is a "Fileuse au repos," now a lady violinist, her instrument in her supple grip. Here we see the "Autel de la Vierge;" there a wheelbarrow in act to be laden with flowers—sometimes we have an "Autumn," sometimes a "Spring," and the season present is always the best! Sometimes we have a little painted anecdote, which amuses the intelligence while it delights the eyes, "Trois mille de besigue," "La bonne aventure de Colombine," for instance. Again we may have a page from the manners of the day, a "Loge à l'Opéra," or a "Sonata." In the first, two young women sit and fan themselves, while a third leans against a column, and peers through an opera-glass. Their gossip is about the artist, perhaps, who cuts those grandly *décolletées* robes, which are the last fashion of the moment, or it may be on nothing more amusing than some ridiculous *coiffure* in the stalls. In the second drawing, three more young women are grouped about a piano. Their carriage is of to-day, but their tall heads and leg-of-mutton-sleeves renew, in a more graceful form, the early fashions of the "Monarchy of July." Two of the girls listen, while the third makes the keys leap, as she turns her head gracefully to a gentleman in a high-collared coat, knee-breeches, and silk stockings, who draws the bow across the strings of a violin.

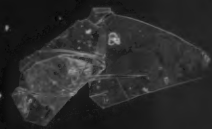
The whole thing is free, distinguished, and without the least touch of affectation. The work is at once bold and delicate, facile and elegant, graceful and yet entirely without pettiness or insincerity.

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But the figures of Madame Lemaire, attractive as they are, pale before her flowers and fruit. "Œillets, Pavots, Roses et Chèvrefeuilles," and "Roses" again. Roses occur continually in the list of her works. Sometimes we have them as buds, sometimes fully blown, sometimes ready to shed their petals. They never outstay their welcome; we never grow weary of their graceful forms, of their various, but ever brilliant tints. Twice, too, "Pavots" re-appear, and invite us to handle the silky petals, to feed our eyes upon the warm and sappy tints. "Chrysanthèmes et Violettes;" "Chrysanthèmes" without violets, and "Violettes" without chrysanthemums; flowers, in fact of every kind, now in careless heaps, now in crystal or enamel vases, and in wicker baskets; a profusion of corollas and leaves; a paradise, in a word, in a *salon*! The Flemish flowers of Velvet Breughel may have had more precision than these; but they were vastly drier! Too often, too, their tints were harsh and discordant. The Dutch flowers of Van Huysum had more style than Madame Lemaire gives hers; they had also more pomp, and more disquiet. The French flowers of Redouté were perfection itself; unfortunately perfection is unnatural. Redouté painted model flowers, ideal flowers, flowers that were immortal rather than alive. The flowers of Madeleine Lemaire have all they should have, and nothing more. They make no pretence to a perfection that is unknown to nature. Without state or pedantry, they charm by their simple combinations, are majestic because they cannot help it, and seductive by their careless grace. Above all, they are full of sap, and bathed in air; they palpitate with life; they have the lightness, the freshness, the transparency, almost the very scent and quiver, of reality. These transcendent qualities spring from the sure and easy celerity of the artist's touch. Stems, blooms, and nervous leaves, in each and all an air of spontaneity delights and surprises all who look, except those







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plodding painters whom it throws into despair. Yes, our painter rivals the sun of April, of July, of October, as an improviser; only, she works much faster. It is partly to this rapidity that her creations owe the happy animation of things opening their arms to the light.

And then her fruit. Her "Pêches," her "Panier de Prunes," her "Groseille et Prunes," her "Raisins," and her "Framboises." The splendour of all these things, their brilliant tints, their velvet or silky textures, their perfect health, defies the power of words. One would swear that the flesh of her peaches or prunes could be tried by the teeth, that their bloom would yield to the touch! The skin of her swelling grapes is no less delicate. In painting this king of fruits she succeeds in getting a peculiar fatness. And to think, too, that in her strawberries, as in her grapes and peaches, every little light is won without the use of body-colour. Never mind how minute it is; on each little pimple, for example, which makes up the circumference of a strawberry, the small decisive light is obtained from the ground, from the white paper, by leaving a white dot in spreading the colour. And yet all this is done without the least look of overscrupulosity. There is no appearance of labour, of the wrong kind of patience, in Madame Lemaire. No hint of fatigue is present in her works. They have the cheerful and unconscious beauty of nature's own masterpieces.

Must I note, in passing, that she is no slave to her success; that she is not afraid to try her hand in new directions? I am not thinking of her "Nature morte," a still-life in which the chiaroscuro, at least, has its animation. I am referring rather to four drawings in *gouache*, which she exhibited in 1885: "La Toilette," "Fleur des champs," "Panier de Fleurs," and "Chrysanthèmes." These were prodigies of precision, and yet they displayed that quick mastery of hand which has life for its consequence. And then, in 1887, there came, besides more experiments in body-colour, a series of drawings in line, to confound those who ascribed some of the artist's success to the facilities of water-colour. These drawings were no reproductions. Neither were they rapid sketches of leafage and flower, such as we find sprinkled on the margins of catalogues; they were original compositions, well understood, and firmly drawn. Their titles were:

"Une jeune Femme," "Pensionnat de jeunes filles," full of variety, grace, and cleverness; and "Dans un jardin," a composition in Indian ink.

The Rue de Sèze exhibition of the present year should have been called the Triumph of Madeleine Lemaire. The most various examples of her skill were there brought together. A "Femme jouant de la Harpe," in Indian ink, hung beside two other "black-and-whites;" a frame of sketches in body-colour had seven drawings in the more orthodox material for their companions. These were, "Abricots," "Groseilles," "Œillets," "Violettes," and "Fleurs des Haies;" a "Marchande de Violettes" in a short eighteenth-century skirt and cloak—an adorable creature, who might have sat for Manon—and finally, "Dans la Serre," an episode from fashionable life, in which fresh young faces and willowy waists seemed rightly framed in smiling flowers and graceful verdure. It was difficult to say whether the tall stems and nodding plumes of the palm-tree, or these youthful forms, defined in every contour by the clinging Empire dresses, were the more graceful. A no less equal contest was waged between cheeks and lips on the one hand, and the flowers, some white as snow, others blood-like in their red, on the other.

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From the Rue de Sèze the smiling fame of Madeleine Lemaire spread over all the summits of Parisian society, both French and cosmopolitan. Her "Roses Trémières" had already been bought by the Princess d'Aremberg; one of her two fans by the Baron Edmond de Rothschild, her "Pavots" by M. Heilbuth. Importuned by a *clientèle* like this, it became necessary for her to produce every year a good deal more than could be shown on even the largest of M. Petit's walls. How many of her drawings have gone home directly to the purchaser, or, at worst, have spent but a few hours in a dealer's window? It has become the ambition of every wealthy noble, of every fortunate financier, of every artist to whom success has come, to possess a "Lemaire;" to hang, upon his studio or *salon* wall, some smiling dame or brilliant bouquet of her creation. Is there a bride who looks through her collection of wedding gifts? She will

be a disappointed woman, if, among them, she find no fan signed with the favoured name. Last year I was present at a betrothal party, the most brilliant of the season. A Parisian nabob was celebrating the betrothal of his daughter to one of the richest of Indian—no; I am wrong; it was the Indian who was a nabob, a real nabob. At any rate the spoils of two continents shone beneath the lustres. The works of jewellers and goldsmiths excited the envy of a crowd of guests, perhaps—it is possible—of a thief or two among them. By the side of a magnificent sapphire *parure*, a fan was lying. On the vellum mount sprigs of gooseberry and black currant mingled their leaves and fruits. A lady tried to lift the fan to her eyes; it offered a light, but firm resistance. “Ah!” cried the young *fiancée* gaily, “that is the only thing I tied down!”

A few favoured individuals have become possessed of examples of Madame Lemaire's talent of a kind more personally interesting to themselves; their portraits, those of their wives or their children. Only one of these portraits, that of the pretty Madame X., was shewn at the gallery of the Rue de Sèze in 1888. But I have contrived to catch a glimpse of that imperial blonde, Madame de B., who seems to have come from Georgia or Circassia to reign over the west; of the rosy brunette, Madame de G., who seems a plagiarism by nineteenth-century Vienna, from the France of the eighteenth; of Raymond R., a little Cæsar in red; of the curly brow of James B., a small boy in lace collar and blue silk blouse, who seems to have wandered from some sandy beach in the Isle of Wight.

I need pursue this list no farther. There is no object in a mere catalogue of unknown faces. Let me rather name the grave, supple, and withal veracious presentment of Mademoiselle Bartet, in a promenade costume; or Mademoiselle Réjane, in the dress of a black *pierrette*, with her bubbling vivacity, her meaning glances, and her general air of kindly malice; or Mademoiselle Brandès, with her look of a refined white-skinned Ethiopian, of a sphinx dressed by Doucet; or Jane Hading, in *La Belle Lurette*, or Jeanne Granier, in the Japanese dress she wore for a charity fête at the Duchesse de Bisaccia's. And at last we come



to the men, or rather to the man, to *Coquelin*! Here he is as *Gringoire*, there as *Pasquin*, his fine but sufficient figure lending itself with equal ease to the frankest and the most subtle art. What a company one might form from the *galerie Lemaire*! On the stage as in the drawing-room, Madame Madeleine Lemaire is painter in ordinary to all that is attractive in Parisian life.

The year 1886 saw the foundation of the *Société des Pastellistes Français*. To qualify for membership, Madame Lemaire had only to put down her brush for a moment, and to take up the chalk. Artists like her have a faculty for knowing far more things than they learn. For three years in succession her water-colours had scarcely returned from the Rue de Sèze, before their places were taken by flowers, by fruits, into which she had breathed life and quality with a few sticks of coloured earth. And in April she was no less various than in March. Beside a simple study, a "Tête de femme," hung a second portrait of Madame de B.; beside a charming little allegory, "Coquetterie," a coquettish reality in "Miss Lucy." A bit of domestic *genre*, "La Jeune Mère," was contrasted with "Le Duo," two profiles of a curious fancy. In the first, the keen, comic, knowing features of M. Coquelin *cadet*, framed in the felt hat of "Thibaut," from the *Coupe Enchantée*; in the second, the powdered head of Madame Pasca, with her soft and cruel eyes, her finely moulded nose, her subtle lips, a head at once feline, imperious, and very civilized, a head which makes us think of some Czarina of the last century, of some Czarina whose seductions were not exactly those of the great Catherine, of one, in fact, for whom M. de Goncourt would lose his soul!

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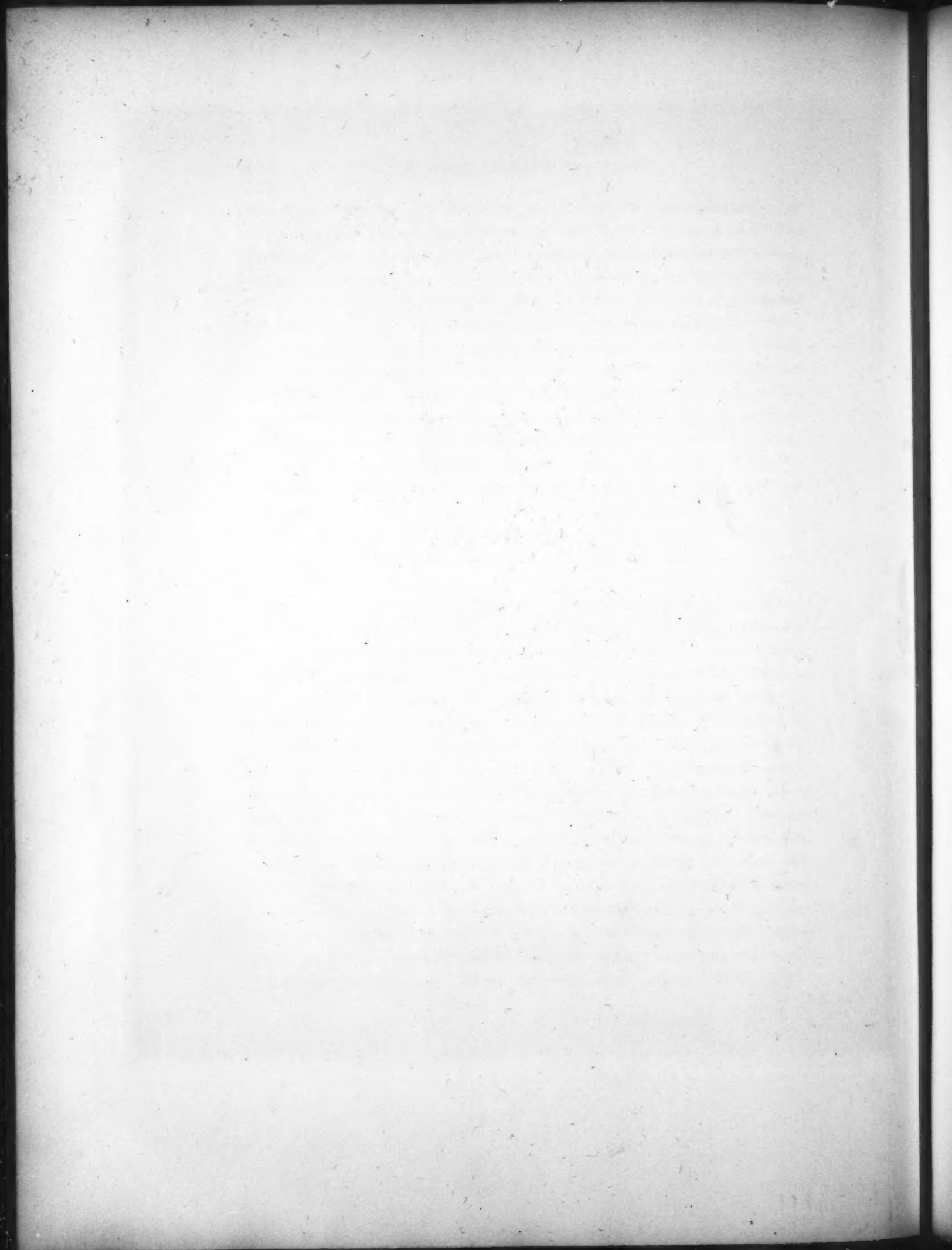
In this life of what I may call elegant activity, Madame Lemaire has accomplished her fate. She, a Frenchwoman, who promised, almost in her babyhood, to be a grand-daughter of Van Dyck, has become to our nineteenth-century Paris what the great Fleming was to the Whitehall of Charles I. If she does not exactly "live in great style," as the catalogue of the National Gallery says of Sir Anthony, she is at least familiar with











the refinements of a luxurious epoch, with rich stuff and pretty faces, and with that most adorable of all superfluities, the beauty of flowers.

And yet neither Madame Lemaire nor her work have lost their unaffected simplicity; her pictures are as natural as they were twenty years ago. She seems to have been created to illustrate *L'Abbé Constantin*, that famous novel which is at once the truest, the simplest, and the most deliciously worldly of our time. Love in the fields, and, as a background to the landscape, a shower of gold! The humble "manse," as the Scotch would call it, with its modest garden; and its lordly neighbour, the great château, whose long-drawn-out vaults lead away, below the sea, to inexhaustible *placers*! What a combination of modernity and romance, of invention and *naïveté*, it all is! But my readers need not go to the pages of M. Ludovic Halévy, to find Madeleine Lemaire at her best as an illustrator. To this very review, to *Art and Letters*, she has contributed more than one dainty picture; M. Marcel Ballot has profited by her brush, and the prose of M. Paul Bourget has won an added meaning from her "Flirtation," and "Five o'clock Tea."

The exhibition of the twenty-five original drawings—eighteen large ones, and seven small, if I counted rightly—for *L'Abbé Constantin*, was a great artistic event. It took place only the other day, and the echo of the sensation it caused has not yet died out. Who can have forgotten the dear Abbé, perched upon a ladder, and working at his vine? Or the strawberry picking in his kitchen garden; the old *bonne* gathering the fruit and throwing it into the bowl held by Jean Reynaud, the young lieutenant of artillery, while the *curé* stood smilingly by, his hands clasped behind his back, and his looks fixed upon his promised dessert? All this was nature at home. On the side of fashion, we had scenes no less delightful. Who does not remember the sleep of the Abbé on the château terrace, after his arrival with his godson? And the figures of Miss Bettina Percival and Mrs. Suzie Scott, in their summer dresses, those marvels of lightness and grace, to the making of which had gone some sixty francs for ribbons and gauze, and perhaps five and twenty *louis* for the designer's taste and fancy? And the young soldier, the lieutenant Jean Reynaud, as he, too, watches the Abbé's



slumbers? Another picture, which once seen, the most barbarous of Philistines could not forget, I mean the adorable vision of Miss Bettina in bed, her pretty head sunk in her laced pillow, her dainty chin reposing in her hand, and her bare elbow nestling in the sheets, while she listens to Suzie, who stands before her with the raised finger of the married sister. In one corner, a shade of transparent porcelain softens the lamp-light, which falls upon the tender skin and casts the shadow of the tent-like curtains across the bed. Before this miracle of elegance and refinement, the name of Moreau le Jeune sprang instinctively to our lips. And in truth, this *édition de luxe* of M. Halévy's masterpiece may fairly be called an epitome of the moral and material aspect of life in this last quarter of the nineteenth century.

In one sense Madame Lemaire has improved on Moreau; she does for both town and country what he did only for the town.

\*  
\* \*

Madeleine Lemaire divides her time between Paris and the provinces, to the perpetual benefit of her art. She passes a large part of the year—all the summer, and nearly all the autumn—in Champagne, at Réveillon. The earliest of the long line of proprietors to whom the demesne belonged before it came into the hands of Madame Herbelin, was Thibault III, Count of Champagne and of Brie, the great grandson of *Thibault le Tricheur*. He lived seven centuries and a half ago. The château itself only dates from the time of Louis XIII. With its four high roofed pavilions, its tall windows, and its brick dressings, it has a lordly, old-world look; but the ducks which inhabit the ditch seem better used to grass than to water. Kept up in a quiet way, the house is only opened to a narrow circle of friends, to men and women of domestic tastes who have their work to do in the world. On one side a vast lawn runs away between two rows of splendid chestnuts; to a distant ha-ha on the other, the fore-court is closed by an ancient *grille*; while immediately beyond ha-ha and railing, on one side as on the other, commences the open freedom of the fields.

The church, close by the château, the farm, and half a dozen houses, make up the village. A friend of mine, who lately found himself at the château, asked a small boy playing in the road whether he did not go to school. "Oh, yes! When it rains!" was the answer. Things are primitive at Réveillon!

While Madame Lemaire was at work on *L'Abbé Constantin* (in many of the drawings, the château has a suspicious likeness to that of Réveillon!) she induced her friends, I am told, to sit for the minor characters. For the chief actors—the two American girls, the Abbé, and the artilleryman, who appeared too often for this—she imported professional models from Paris. The two Americans were lodged at the château; the Abbé and his godson at the village inn.

Now, on the first evening of their arrival, the *brigadier de gendarmerie* in making his round, sees the tavern windows lighted up later than usual, at nine, perhaps, or ten! Calling to his *gendarme*, he makes for the door, and finds the new importations at supper. He demands their papers. Their papers! neither the young fellow nor his more experienced senior had given a thought to passports. They would as soon have set about getting them for the Rue de Monceau as for Champagne. The elder of the pair, the Abbé, a man venerable in appearance and tranquil in manner, frankly confessed the omission.

"Your profession, then?" asked the brigadier.

"Models."

"Hein! models? what is that?"

"We sit."

"You sit! Sit where?"

"We sit for the lady at the château— she paints pictures from us."

"Come now! The lady at the château paints portraits of such as you? That is a little too much! And if it were true, you would not be here, but there! I ask you again, what are your professions?"

"We are models."

"No more nonsense, please; I ask you, a last time, what professions do you follow?"

Alas! One may have a venerable head, a tranquil soul, and even

polished manners; one may have been justly selected to figure as a holy personage, and to be admitted day after day, for months at a time, into a household consisting of two ladies and a young girl, and yet one remains a man, and before the pig-headed obstinacy of an ignorant *gendarme* who knows nothing, and wants to know nothing, of studio manners and customs, one may end by losing one's self-command. To the last demand of the brigadier, spoken with brusquerie, almost with brutality, the Abbé Constantin replied— But no, I must wrap up the Abbé's reply before launching it at your head. So then, forgetting he was chaplain to the *mobiles* of Souvigny, fancying, perhaps, for the moment, that he was chaplain to Cambronne, and that the date was 1815, the Abbé shouted—

And so he was seized by four vigorous arms, was dragged from his supper and the society of his godson, and passed on from brigade to brigade, to the town of Esternay, to answer for the crime of quoting a *réplique sublime* to a brace of country policemen!

In this primitive country, where school is only enforced when it rains, and where the authorities ignore the ways and necessities of painters, where roses and poppies flourish exceedingly, and fruits ripen early, there, under the open timbers of the hall which was once the castle chapel, or, when the weather is fine and the season propitious, in the open air, the gifted *châtelaine* paints her fruits and her flowers, and bathes them in their native light and peace. At the beginning of winter, she returns to the capital laden with sketches and finished drawings, with fresh air and serenity, with the frankness and vigour of nature, to charm us for another season.

\* \* \*

And now the autumn is over, and Madeleine Lemaire is back in Paris. Her *atelier* is divided from the house in the Rue de Monceau, which she shares with her aunt, by a little garden. Here, again, we find no state, no pretension, nothing to recall the temples which certain painters raise to their own genius, nothing, on the other hand, which breathes of the laboratory or workshop.



Her studio is merely a drawing-room with a difference : a dome-roofed hall, lighted by a large bow-window looking into a verandah, the walls hung with tapestries, Indian stuffs, and pictures by friends who are also painters. By the side of a light easel we find a pot of flowers on a stand ; near the chair before it, a small table with a bowl of water and an open box of colours ; these are all the proofs that we are in studio.

So long as the daylight lasts, Madame Lemaire is here at work. Her costume only differs from those of the *mondaines* who visit her by the greater simplicity of its elegance. She talks as she works, and if her hand-rest moves, so much the worse for her work ! For her favourite maul-stick is a little black Pomeranian, "La Loute" the name of it, which nestles in her lap ! Now and then, too, an interruption comes from a distant corner of the studio. A fresh young voice asks a question, and a glance of Madame's soft eyes is thrown to a young girl who is painting flowers in body-colour on silk or satin. Like her mother in face, Mademoiselle Suzette contrives to show talent in art, without slavish imitation. Her work had already been seen and admired by our aquarellists before they engaged her to decorate their pavilion for next year's *Exposition*. In ten or twenty years it will be necessary, I fancy, to write an article like this, not upon the niece, but upon the grand-niece, of Madame Herbelin. Three generations of artists in a single nest ! Is not that a pretty sight ?

At any rate Parisians think so, whether men or women. Here, in this *atelier* of the Rue de Monceau, between the grand piano and the large Louis XIV mirror, the representatives of every art, even of that most difficult art of doing nothing, rub shoulders with each other. This very mirror reflected, years ago, in the house of the mayor of Fréjus, the wearied figure of the great Napoleon ; to-day its surface gleams with a more cheerful crowd. Whoever contributes by talent, wit, or beauty, to the perennial fête of Paris, is welcome here, and will find himself, for the moment, the equal of the greatest lord or lady in the country. What wrong-headed demon could it be, that inspired some gutter-bred Erostratus, to set fire to such a house a few years ago ? It was in 1882,

and the motive was to do honour to *Égalité*. One Clément Duval, member of some anarchist society, took advantage of a dark night in October to proclaim his principles. He made his way into the home of the Lemaire by escalade, daubed the walls with petroleum, lighted a slow match, and retired, kindly lifting certain trinkets of value out of harm's way as he went!... Happily a benevolent deity was at hand, to protect gentle women and lovely things.

Is it not natural to suppose that from this intercourse with all that is most civilized in Paris, Madeleine Lemaire gets not only types, but ideas and even pictorial qualities? Just as, in the country, she found frankness, and the bloom of nature, so in the capital, she finds elegance, refinement, and man at his best! The genius with which she combines the two is the characteristic note of her art, and that—may I say it—charms Frenchman and foreigner alike, because it is so truly French.

LOUIS GANDERAX.





## THE COMÉDIE-FRANÇAISE

MADemoisELLE ADELINe DUDLAY



MADemoisELLE Adeline Dudlay is not only a remarkable artist; she is a woman of rare capacity, of exquisite good sense, and with a mind quite out of the common. Having to write her biography, to speak of her talent, and analyse it, I thought I could not do better than apply to her through the medium of one of her friends, who is also one of mine, and say to her: "What do you think about yourself?"

I should not venture to try this experiment with any of your comrades; but I feel that, with you, I am sure to find in the memoir I am seeking from you a just appreciation of your merits, and judicious views about the art that you cultivate with such energetic perseverance."

Next day I received from the excellent friend who had undertaken my commission, a letter written *currente calamo* about Mademoiselle Adeline Dudlay. I hesitated at first to send it to the press; for the writer let me know in a postscript that it had not been composed with an eye to publicity. But the fragment is so curious, it is a confession so interesting, that I have overlooked all scruples, and have resolved to give it in its



entirety, only omitting here and there a few details and repetitions unsuited to these pages.

"— I studied at the Brussels Conservatoire with Mademoiselle Jeanne Tordeus for my teacher. I never knew a better one, and to her I owe a great deal. She introduced me to Madame de Bornier, who got me a hearing from M. Perrin. I was engaged on the spot. What took M. Perrin by surprise was the fact of my speaking, instead of singing. 'She speaks,' he kept on saying, 'she speaks!' At that time, I did indeed speak, and I owed it to my teacher, who had preserved the traditions of Samson, Provost, and Regnier. M. Perrin begged Mademoiselle Tordeus to supervise the continuance of my studies and to let him know when she thought me capable of coming out.

"I came out in M. de Bornier's *Rome Vaincue* only four months after my trial-hearing. It was a misfortune for me; I was too young. My success was greater than I deserved. I was held up to admiration as an artist, and I was only a school-girl.

"I lost Mademoiselle Tordeus' guidance and advice too soon, and was left abandoned to my own resources and my idleness. I promised to be frank, and frank I will be. I experienced a crisis of laziness; I, who have the reputation of having always been so laborious! It is a stolen reputation; I have wasted five years of my life.

"At last, one day, I saw that I could not go on in this way. The rare bits of advice, often very different for the same part, that were given me by the successive stage managers for the week, the natural aptitudes I may have had, all these were insufficient. I felt that I was going off. I set to work again with Madame Plessy, and no one could be more grateful to her than I am for the excellent lessons she gave me.

"When I was quite a girl, what I chiefly saw in a part was its outside shell, its declamatory passages; I had a keen ear for loud applause—I was gradually drawn to the comprehension of a work in its entirety, to the thinking out of a character, and then it was that my art became really interesting to me. It is hardly three years since I have begun to understand the whole pleasure of digging deep into a part, and trying to give









Peint par M. Boust de Monvel.

Photographie Coupin & Co.

MADemoisELLE DUDLAY  
(COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE)



it life. I know, too, how vexed I am when I cannot hit upon the necessary mode of expressing the various feelings of a character exactly as I feel them.

"Costume, gesture, facial play, attitude, all these are necessary things and give body to a character. What is still more indispensable is diction, to give it a soul, that is, to give it life. There you have the difficult thing to acquire, especially when, like myself, you have contracted bad habits in parts too heavy for you, played too soon, and studied without advice. I am far from having attained the end I pursued, and I ask myself with fear and trembling whether I shall ever lay hold of that broad, simple, and true diction, which is my ideal. One of the difficulties of tragedy is to reach verity without falling into vulgarity, to have breadth of style without false emphasis.

"The critics were very kind to me in *Rome Vaincue* and *Horace*. I kept their sympathies for a year or two; but they ultimately made up for this, a little too much so for my taste. They discerned beauty in me, it seems, a thing I have the smallest of claims to. They found fault with my general ideas about my parts, and they were right. But they refused to recognize in me what they had so liberally accorded me at the outset; inspiration and sacred fire. In all this I am afraid there was an excess both of indulgence and of severity—I fancy it would have been possible to guide and advise me by more easy stages. I was then between seventeen and twenty-two, and seeing me by turns embodying *Hermione* and *Chimène*, *Pauline* and *Monime*, they might have taken my age into account, as well as the difficulty of the parts I was playing, and the small number of performances (eighteen a year on the average) that I had for training myself in so difficult an art; yes a very, very difficult art. You have to go straight to the mark; if you fall short of it you are inadequate; if you go beyond it the thing is worse still, you are ridiculous.

"The critics had been favourable to me in *Phèdre*, a part in which I had been only so-so. Now that I have got to be a little more satisfied with myself in it, no one takes any interest in the matter. Objections were raised to my playing in *Le Supplice d'une femme*, and *Les Maucroix*. For some reason or other, they withdrew *Le Supplice d'une femme* from the bills just at the moment when, by M. Thierry's own admission, I was beginning



to make great progress in it. As far as *Les Maucroix* goes, I crave indulgence. It was madness to cast me for the part, and cruelty to force it upon me.

"I hardly recovered the sympathy of the critics until the revival of *Andromaque* for the first appearance of Mademoiselle Hadamard; but it was especially in the case of *Roxane* that the press was unanimously kind to me. They awarded me the merit of originality! I don't wish to depreciate the part, or to turn up my nose at praises of which I appreciate the full value; but you are sufficiently acquainted with the repertory, you have followed my career with sufficient fidelity to know, without any need for my insisting on the point, that I had already had occasion in other parts to bring into evidence the qualities of truth and modernity that it was given to me to display in *Roxane*.

"I should have liked to have found myself advised and encouraged by my judges a little earlier in the day. I may seem to show ill-feeling. Nothing is farther from my thoughts. What sometimes puts me out of patience is the marked inequality of the critics in regard to me; they acknowledged the results at which I arrived either too freely, or not freely enough. That, may be, is neither the critics' fault, nor my own. The unfortunate part of it is that tragedy, for the many a thing either strange or forgotten, is less studied than it ought to be by the critics, in order to arrive at the successive degrees of an artist's value, and, to be quite frank, it is generally treated in the theatre as a thing of little account.

"Ah! If people had any idea of the work we are made to go through, or rather that we are not made to go through, we actresses of tragedy, they would perhaps consider us admirable. Happy are the actors who only play in modern pieces! On the stage they have a hundred more opportunities than we have for working at an art which is a hundred times less difficult than ours.

"Now that I am beginning to get a clear insight into this terrible art of tragedy, it is said that I might have reached this result earlier if, after a period of exaggerated popularity, I had had the necessary guidance from my manager and my critics. I believe there is still time to give me help both for my own profit, and for that of my art. I have no fear of the criticisms that advise, only of those that 'slate' without

advising, and I have but one thing to ask, that I may be given opportunities for work.

"As for the public, of them I have never had to complain. They have always given or refused me their applause according as I have succeeded or not, and this reminds me of the passage in a letter that M. Perrin wrote to me from London : 'Bend your thoughts to your work, and to putting those who are really unjust towards you in the wrong. Take for your motto that capital word 'Perseverance.' And after all, the public are often with you. It is they who will show you to be in the right.'

"About my diction people have done me the honour to invent amusing stories. I have not, it seems, hesitated to have my teeth drawn and put in again, and to undergo all kinds of tortures. All that is only half true. An accident in childhood had indeed rendered my pronunciation defective. All that I had to do to cure myself of it was to wear a rather painful apparatus, which I was soon able to give up using—"

It is impossible to speak of one's self with more simplicity, grace, and let me add, with a stronger dash of mischief. For it is upon my own head that fall most of the arrows so wittily let fly against the critics. Need I say that they have made me smile? I don't pretend to infallibility; in the play-house I am a man of first impressions, and am accustomed to write off-hand. It is quite natural for me to take critical summersaults that may lead to accusations of caprice. May be there is something else at fault besides my nerves when I modify or relinquish my first opinions.

Mademoiselle Dudley came out in 1876 in *Rome Vaincue*. There was a great fuss over her first appearance. She had the finest arms in the world, the arms of an antique statue, arms that have remained famous and legendary; an intelligent and expressive physiognomy; a slight defect in pronunciation that seemed (for everything becomes an actress on her first appearance) one grace the more.

She was received with transport; overwhelmed with compliments; it was not quite a case, as she seems to think, of infatuation. It was

rather an account liberally opened for her; the sort of account we open for new comers, when they give good promise. We were not long in changing our tone; but has not Mademoiselle Dudlay just confessed that she gave up five years of her life to idleness? Critics were ignorant of this detail, they saw the results and recorded them, not without acerbity, too much acerbity, perhaps, as I am quite prepared to acknowledge.

This acerbity, I do not conceal it, was kept alive by a consideration with which art has very little to do. Mademoiselle Dudlay had the reputation at this time of being in high favour with the management, and it was rumoured as certain that M. Perrin was thinking of pitchforking her into the Societariate, while getting rid of Mademoiselle Sarah Bernhardt. You may guess whether I could coolly look on at what seemed to me a horrible case of supersession. I started a campaign against Mademoiselle Dudlay. She confessed that at that time she had exposed herself to attack. This attack would assuredly have been less vigorous if I had not thought it my duty to throw into the opposite scale the sword of the critic Brennus. I have been reading my criticisms over again; some of them are harsh to the verge of injustice, and I should not write them now, but you cannot make war with wooden cannons, loaded with bread-crumb bullets.

Mademoiselle Sarah Bernhardt left the Comédie-Française, and Mademoiselle Dudlay remained to bear the burden of tragedy by herself. It was in December, 1882, that she was elected to the Societariate, I had often said that she had carried talent to that extreme limit where it changes its name, and is called genius. I approved, in common with the whole press, this election that came as a reward for long and important services. Mademoiselle Dudlay was the only woman on the stage competent to undertake the Queens of Tragedy. Tall, well-made, with the arms I have told you of, a sweetly grave mouth, a keen, profound look, she had the dignity of gait suitable for her line. Let it be added that her delicate features, her milk-white complexion, and her wealth of fair hair still further brought out the gleam of her dark eyes, that were lit up by all the tragic passions. Her voice was superb; M. Gevaert, who was Director of the Conservatoire of Brussels, had at one time wanted



to reserve it for the singing classes, so deep and rich did he find it; it was the very voice for an actress of tragedy.

Once admitted a *sociétaire*, she gradually acquired greater and greater authority over the public. Personally I always found her a little hard; she seemed to me to lack charm. But she stamped upon the characters she attempted a singular impress of modernity; she sought to inform antique tragedy with the spirit of the passions of to-day. I could find no fault with her for straining in this direction; I, who have always maintained the thesis that the only way of reviving the taste for tragedy is to play it as if it were a drama written yesterday.

What she lacked in order to get complete possession of her parts (she herself has recognized it in her autobiography), was to play them with sufficient frequency. Tragedy was given the cold shoulder at the Comédie-Française, and in the committee it had powerful adversaries, who would have been well pleased to strike it out of the repertory under the pretext that it made less money than *Le Mari à la campagne* or *Un Parisien*.

These gentlemen, in virtue of a vote dated the 6th of February, 1886, decided that the engagement of Mademoiselle Dudley as a *sociétaire* should not be renewed for ten years. Their idea was to proscribe tragedy by driving away the woman who was its sole representative. I forgot all former differences and started a campaign for Mademoiselle Dudley, in favour of Tragedy now in danger. On the 21st of the same month, Mademoiselle Dudley played with immense success at a Sunday afternoon's performance, the part of Camille in *Les Horaces*, before a crowded house. M. Goblet, the Minister, and M. Turquet, Under-Secretary of State, were present at this performance. Three days later, M. Goblet, exercising the powers entrusted to him by the Decree of Moscow, renewed Mademoiselle Dudley's engagement as *sociétaire* for ten years. At once all the members of the committee, MM. Got, Delaunay, Coquelin, Febvre, Worms, Mounet-Sully and Laroche, sent in their resignations. The Minister accepted them without a word, and nominated another committee.

It was a storm in a tea-cup. The public sided with the Minister, who was entirely in the right. Mademoiselle Dudley has since brilliantly justified this little *Coup d'État*.

In 1887, the day after that on which she had displayed the most noteworthy qualities in *Roxane*, I wrote in the *Temps* :

"What a thing prejudice is, to be sure! If it were agreed that Mademoiselle Dudlay is a great artist, people would go into raptures of admiration on seeing her in *Roxane*; the public would besiege the box-office; the applause would be endless, the recalls without number; but it is by slow efforts that she has conquered her place in the Temple; we have seen her gradually rising, with no sudden beating of the wing, in a regular and peaceful flight. No one will now admit her to be what is called a born artist. The truth, however, is that she has admirable moments!"

Mademoiselle Adeline Dudlay is, at the hour of my writing, in the full splendour of her beauty, her talents, and her renown. We trust that the engagement of Madame Tessandier will admit of one of the classic masterpieces being now and then restored to the stage; there are still good times left, both for the theatre and for Tragedy.

FRANCISQUE SARCEY.



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